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THE PRAYER BOOK UNVEILED

IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.

THE PRAYER BOOK UNVEILED

IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST;

OR,

Unity without Liturgical Revision.

LETTERS FOR NONCONFORMISTS,

EXPOSITORY OF THE CHURCH'S TEACHING, ETC.

ADDRESSED TO THE REV. T. BINNEY.

BY THE

REV. R. AITKEN,

Incumbent of Pendeen, Cornwall,
and
Domestic Chaplain to the Earl of Seafield.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE WORLD IS ONLY A PREPARATION FOR THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

A SECOND edition of this little book has been long and earnestly called for; but I was unwilling to publish a mere reprint, as a more matured and comprehensive work on the subject is evidently the great necessity of the day. Hitherto, however, the duties of a large parish, and other engagements, have prevented me from altering the form of the book and enlarging its several parts; and this, though I fully purpose doing it, must for the present remain undone.

Since the first edition was published, the Tractarian party have singularly verified my prediction as to their future course of action, by their attempt to introduce into the Church, and to render popular, a kind of modified Romanism. It was easy to foresee that this would be the case, if they persisted in rejecting Evangelical truth. For if the earnestly religious, who accept the Church's teaching in the letter, do not realize sacramental grace in power (and this they never can do without justifying faith) they are sure to seek some

substitute for it, in accordance with the conceptions of the natural mind; and of these there is an ample supply in the Church of Rome. It is only the natural mind that can attempt to revive the Jewish types, which Christian realities have done away, or convert a means of grace into an object of worship; and when there is any such unspiritual perversion of Divine ordinances, the means are not likely to accomplish the end for which they are specially appointed. It was greatly to the credit of the party, and in perfect accordance with their freely acknowledged zeal in defending objective truth, that they evinced a willingness to form a coalition with Evangelicals in order to repel the assault which was being made upon the doctrines of our holy religion, by men who are in the Church, but not of it, and whom the Church, in a healthier state and under more favourable circumstances would have summarily ejected. But confederacies which are formed by the sacrifice or suppression of principle, and despite existing differences of opinion on vital truths, are only made to be "broken in pieces." Already one party to the confederacy is calling upon the civil government to put forth its powers to check the Romanising developments of the other. Evangelicals, as God's witnesses for saving truth, ought to have known and felt that, by such a

coalition, they were giving Tractarians to infer that, after all, the difference between the two parties was not of such vital importance as had been alleged; and the leader of that school has now turned round upon them and taunted them with their inconsistency in calling for the aid of the civil power to restrict the liberty of the Ritualists in its development towards Rome, while they are making no outcry for an act of Parliament to restrain the propagators of positive heresy. Whether it be right or whether it be wrong to call for the interference of the civil power in either case, or in both, I have no wish at present to express an opinion, but certainly the accusation of inconsistency arises from a very superficial view of the case. Heterodoxy varies its form, and is simply the ephemeral production of the restless, unsanctified, natural mind; it has no support from any existing organization; but Romanism is an insidious and corrupting leaven, which has most effect upon a certain class of religiously disposed persons, to whom it offers a spurious substitute for the saving truth which their spiritual state requires. Our Church has already suffered much from its deluding influence; and there are not wanting assiduous agents without her communion who are not over scrupulous as to the means they employ in alluring their victims. Prevention is

doubtless a necessity. Our bishops, I dare say, are doing their duty according to their power, but if the laity had a voice in the appointment of their ministers, under any kind of reasonable restriction, we should soon hear nothing more of Romish innovations. The great original cause of the Reformation still exists. The Word of God and Rome are at issue upon the cardinal point of saving truth; and the views of Tractarians on the vital doctrine of justification by faith are similar to those which are held by the Church of Rome. There cannot, and there ought not, to be any kind of coalition between them and God's witnesses for this very truth. Every co-operation in the work of the ministry is found to be an impossibility. Now this is just an illustration of what I have so repeatedly and strongly stated throughout this little book. The fact meets us everywhere, and it is our wisdom to look it in the face, that until *the Gospel of our Salvation and the Gospel of the Kingdom* are held in harmonious unity, instead of being arrayed antagonistically against each other, there can neither be peace nor prosperity within the Church. God will have a controversy with us as long as we have a controversy with each other; and our agreeing to differ will make the case no better; for such a course is alien to the spirit of Christian morality.

Truly the times are perilous. There is within the Church not only an openly avowed system of Romanizing, but also a numerous class of persons who are propagating an evasive theory of the Atonement, which even the rationalistic mind will find it difficult to accept, but which can certainly give no peace to an awakened soul. Their teaching amounts, in short, to a "denying of the Lord that bought them"; and, in addition to this fearful heresy, they have wrested from their plain significance the solemn declarations of our Lord respecting the eternity of future punishments, and given them an interpretation of their own. By some of the men of free thought even the Divinity of our Lord is more than questioned; and the subjection of the Word of God to the critical strictures of the natural mind has also been carried so far that the actual inspiration of the Scriptures has come to be considered a doctrine about which even good men may agree to differ. There may be troubles from without as well as from within. Nothing less than the separation of Church and State will satisfy the political Dissenter, and it is not unlikely that there will be a much more formidable attack from this quarter than ever there has been before. What a pity it is that there should be any such anomaly among professing

Christians as a political Dissenter, or that there should be any Dissenters at all. Oh that every good man who professes to be a Churchman, would help me to convince Dissenters that it is both their interest and their duty, to use their influence and employ their best efforts, in reforming, strengthening, and extending the Church, that they and their children's children may find in her the most blessed, the safest, and the best of homes! What a field for holy, child-like effort is presented, notwithstanding all our differences, divisions, and contentions, to the enlightened, Catholic-minded, peace-making Christian; and what need there is for fervent continuous intercessory prayer! If God in His great mercy would awaken the earnest-minded Tractarian to the sense of his need *of the Gospel of Salvation*, and open the understandings of our Evangelical and Nonconforming brethren to discern the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, there would soon be an united, extended, and effective Church, powerful enough in the strength of the Lord to make adequate provision for the spiritual wants of our long and shamefully neglected population, and to evangelize the world. It is more apparent than we are willing to believe, that as we are, we cannot long remain; combinations may be formed of which no man can foresee the result. The

external administration of the Church is an offence, a by-word, a reproach, and beyond defence; and if internal unity cannot by God's help be brought about, and if there be not a great increase of spiritual life within it, the growing intelligence of the people, and their probable accession to a greater amount of political power are more likely to lead to its ceasing to be the Established Church of our land than to its reformation; and should this be the case, there would be an immediate and an irreparable disruption, which would pave the way to the eventual triumph of Romanism and infidelity. It is in troublous and yet hopeful times, that this little book is again sent forth on its mission of peace. A proposal has been made to publish a large edition, simply as a reprint, on the ground that it has been useful to many, and may be useful to more, to which I have consented with some little reluctance. I have only been able to make a few corrections and some unimportant alterations. But in revising the book I have felt most deeply, that it is "not by might nor by power" that so great a work as the restoration of Christian unity is to be accomplished. Notwithstanding its many defects, the book is full from beginning to end of all important truth, and yet with all its labored repetitions and expositions, how very little impression

has it made upon the religious mind of the day. It is a great saying, "Now are we the sons of God;" but, O how unlike Him! Where is His wisdom? Where is His power? I am very sensible that, if more of the spirit of Christ had been manifested in the book, it would have done its work much more effectually. But there may be faults in the reader, as well as in the writer. There may be little Divine power and illumination in the one, but is there always a receptive capacity—the effect of a humble and prayerful teachableness—in the other? In everything it behoveth us to give thanks. It is of God's great mercy and goodness that the book has been made a blessing to so many; and I trust it will be the fervent and continued prayer of those who have profited by it,—in which I shall most heartily unite,—that the expectations which have been formed as to the results of its republication may, by God's blessing, be more than fully realized.

PENDEEN PARSONAGE,

June, 1867.

INTRODUCTION.

An able controversialist, who has published a refutation of the Essays and Reviews, gives us the following counsel:—"*Let every one use all his powers, and make all the discoveries he can. Let him use research unshrinkingly, and freely enunciate his thoughts. Truth, essential truth, is one, and party not founded on it must go down. We must all learn. Let us work on steadily towards the light; and let each beware of worshipping his own peculiarities of idea; so that we may learn from every one, and teach all; but never swerve from the plain, honest, common sense interpretation of God's Word. We have a good deal to learn and to unlearn; to do, and perhaps to suffer. But things are progressing, not retrograding.*"

Such sentiments coming from a man of the Evangelical school is indeed a hopeful indication of progress. The day is surely beginning to dawn upon us when religious men of all parties will no

longer suffer themselves to be so far deluded, as to imagine that their own peculiar system is the purest form of our holy religion, and comprises the whole of Christianity. O, if instead of the empty, arrogant boast,—"We are all right; truth and piety are with us,"—there were a humbling sense of our unlikeness to Christ, and of our limited and very imperfect knowledge of Divine truth; an earnest, careful, and reverent study of the Word; and an honest, and ardent, and prayerful application of the heart and mind, soul and spirit to "learn Christ," the peace of the Church would soon cease to be disturbed by the efforts of the two great parties in it, to controvert the two classes of truth for which they are respectively God's witnesses; for they would very soon and very easily discover that the very truths which they are each trying to controvert, it is both their duty and their privilege to realize in saving and transforming power.

"*We must all learn; and let each beware of worshipping his own peculiarities of idea, so that we may learn from every one.*" Most wise, most salutary, and most needful counsel; but will it be taken? Which party will make the first attempt to act upon it? Will that very party to which he belongs who gives it admit the fact that they require to be taught, and that they

have need to learn? It is the very want of this teachableness—it is the supremacy of self-satisfied opiniativeness—which perpetuates all our differences and divisions. Which of all the parties, of all the sects, of all the denominations does not make its boast that it is "rich, and increased with goods and hath need of nothing?" It is not in the nature of party to think humbly of itself. It cannot obey the apostolical injunction "to esteem other better than itself." Those who believe that the Church is Christ's institute cannot leave it, and must do their best to reform the abuses which have crept into it. They can afford to be humble; and truly there is enough to humble them. But party is a matter of choice. If *one* does not please, it is not very difficult to find or to make another. Party depends for its very existence upon the conviction of its partisans that it is preferable to all others. The spirit of party is simply a development of the self-willed, self-seeking, self-pleasing natural spirit, unrestrained by a sense of individual responsibility, whatever may be the object for which the particular party exists. It is always proud, self-sufficient, self-exalting, self-confident and boastful. Party will not submit to be taught, and cannot learn. The expansion of its views would be its destruction. For instance, if Church truth were admitted into the Evangelical system, the

class of truths properly called *Evangelical* would take their place in the proportion of faith, as *first principles,* instead of being accounted the *all in all* of our holy religion, and Evangelicalism as such would cease to exist. And if Evangelical truth were admitted into Churchism, there would be an end to the fatal misconception, that the grace of justification comes by the sacraments; the purposes for which the sacraments were instituted would be discerned, and they would cease to be regarded as a species of *charm;* externals would simply be the embodiment or symbol of an inner life, and Churchism would be converted into true Catholicism.

When God, in great mercy, revives a neglected truth, it is doubtless our duty to give prominence to that truth; but when we make it the foundation or centre of a system, we sin against the truth by destroying the proportion of faith. Light is given to individual members for the good of the body; but the formation of a party creates an interest independent of the body and subversive of its unity and interests. In short, party is an evil root, however laudable its purpose may be; and, like all evils, it cannot be mended—it must either be destroyed by the acceptance of enlarged views of Divine truth, or fall into decay through the diminishing zeal and gradual defection of its

adherents. Besides, when the proportion of faith is sinned against by giving undue prominence to any one truth, the mind becomes judicially blinded to correlative truths; for every sin has its own punishment *now*, as well as its entail of future consequences. Hence the antagonism which at present exists between the doctrine of justification by faith and what is called the sacramental system. How otherwise can the fact be accounted for—that two great parts of a consistent whole, which are actually essential to the healthful and effective operation of each other, should be pitted against one another as opponents, as if there were an irreconcilable contrariety between them? "Be not wise," saith the Apostle, "in your own conceits. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." But parties, as I have just said, cannot think humbly of themselves. They know nothing of "poverty of spirit"—the first in the ascending line of Christian virtues. The spirit of party is not only proud, self-exalting and self-confident, but it is a censorious, envious and bitter spirit, the veriest contrast to the spirit of Christianity. Partisans may allege that they are not under the influence

of party spirit; but, the truth is, party, like everything else, be it good or be it evil, cannot exist without its *spirit;* individuals may be more or less under its influence, but it is always there; and wherever it is, it is in some degree subversive of the Christian spirit.

If party were not blind, it might easily make the discovery that it has very little to be proud of, and that there is very much to humble it; for it exists in opposition to the appointed order of God and to His clearly revealed will. And as it is "God who dealeth to every man the measure of faith;" and as it is only given to *them* who *do* the will of God to know of the doctrine whether it be of God, those who belong to a *party* have no right to expect any great measure of spiritual enlightenment, and most certainly they do not possess it. They may compile systems of divinity, and draw up confessions of faith in accordance with their own views, and all who agree with them in opinion may give their adherence to such systems and views, and each party may say to all others, "I have no need of thee;" but the all-important fact is overlooked—that a party is man's work, and not God's institute—a self-constituted association, and not the body of Christ. Now, the body of Christ is *one* although it has many members; and were it even true, as

some allege, that the body includes *all parties*, who hold what are called essential truths, this would not very much alter the case; for what profit is there in belonging to the body if we are not in subjection to it? Unless we have communion with it we cannot be partakers of its blessings.

The unity of the body is not a mere arbitrary appointment. It is one purpose of the Church's institution to render us dependent upon and subject to each other, and thus to subserve to the subjugation of the creaturely will. The Church places us under a law of conduct which is *in God* and *out of self;* whereas divisive principles assume it to be our inalienable right to have a law of conduct in ourselves, whether it be in accordance with God's revealed will or not; and, therefore, divisive principles are antichristian both in their nature and tendency. The fulness of the measure of truth has never been dealt out to any party, because the very existence of self-constituted parties is an offence against the unity of the body, and is directly contrary to the revealed will of God and to the clearest and strongest apostolical injunctions. Still, in the Divine government there are evidently in operation correlative principles of action, which to our very limited conceptions may have the appearance of contrariety. The Holy One of

Israel cannot be limited. Infinite wisdom has never yet failed to make a necessary and righteous provision against the wilfulness of man and the unfaithfulness of his Church. He has never yet left himself without a witness to any one class of Divine truth; and souls have not been left to perish for lack of knowledge, that the external unity of the Church might be preserved. For instance in our own Church, (and I believe it to be God's special witness for the truth in these last days, yea, and the very pillar and ground of the truth,) every class of truth is *not* witnessed to as by "living epistles written by the Spirit of God" that may be "known and read of all men." Separation from her has not always been wilful, although it may have been premature. And does any man suppose that our most loving Father has no sympathy with His tempted and tried ones, who are perplexed under the grievous judgment of an unspiritual ministry? Can He look with indifference upon the rejection of His witnesses, whom He from time to time raises up to revive His saving truth, and to do the work which the Church has neglected to do? At this moment, when the Church cannot provide for the spiritual necessities of the nation, can it be His will that the thousands not in communion with the Church, who are proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Divine grace

throughout the land, should be unfaithful to the dispensation of the gospel which has been committed to them, and hold their peace while souls are perishing, because they have not been canonically ordained? The fact is undeniable that God has owned and blessed, and continues to own and bless, the Evangelizing labours of our nonconforming brethren, yea, and that they have been and are His specially favoured and honoured witnesses for Evangelical truth.

Many salutary lessons are to be learned from this state of things, if we would only learn them. We may be very sure that there is no contrariety between the Divine government and God's revealed will. Unity is doubtless the normal condition, so to speak, of the Christian Church. It is the state of perfectness, which ought to have been preserved, and which, when lost, we ought to strive to regain. Still, salvation is the *first* necessity; and Churchmen have been and are most unfaithful to the doctrine of "justification by faith," upon which our salvation ever has depended, and ever will depend; and the consequence is, unconverted Churchmen have been and are blinded to the nature of God's remedial economy. The salvation which is "without money and without price" —which is "of grace," and "by faith," is just as great a stumbling-block *now* to the unconverted

Churchman, as it was to the Jews in the days of St. Paul; and while this continues to be the case, dissent will be perpetuated. But dissent does not, on this account, cease to be an evil, although I have no sympathy with those who denounce it as a "crime." What we have to mourn over is the fact that the Dissenters of the present day seem to be doing their utmost to forget their real position as *protesters against the Church's unfaithfulness to vital, saving truth;* and to assume a position which God will never own. They are not content with the liberty of forming themselves into provisional religious communities, but are assuming the right of constituting their communities *rival churches,* and of disputing the supremacy of the national Church; in other words, they are striving to obtain the *national recognition of divisive principles,* which are directly contrary to the revealed will of God, to the plainest apostolical injunctions, and to the spirit and precepts of Christianity. They are evidently as much blinded to the sinfulness of the fearful course which they are pursuing, as the *unconverted* Churchman is to his fatal error, when he virtually ignores the saving and life-giving doctrine of justification by faith. Such are the judicial effects of the existing divisions and subdivisions among professing Christians. If Dissenters had submitted to the persecu-

tions of the carnal mind within the Church, and had resolutely held their position, as *protesters* against unspiritual ministrations—if they had continued to occupy a *provisional* position, and directed their energies to the *reformation of the Church*, and *to the conversion of the unconverted clergy and lay members of the Church*,—we should not have had to mourn over and contend against the reckless repudiation of the obligations to Christian unity, with which too many of our nonconforming brethren are justly chargeable.

Churchmen and Dissenters who allow themselves to be carried away by the spirit of party, like the unnatural combatants in America, alternately excite our sympathy and our indignation. Both are, no doubt, contending for what they *believe* to be right and true, but, unhappily, neither of them can see where they are wrong; and it is just as undeniable a fact that they are both sinning against the truth, injuring the highest interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and destroying each other's souls, as that the Americans are ruining their country and cruelly slaughtering each other by thousands. Nonconformists may persist in railing and fighting against the carnal mind in the Church, and there is no disputing the truth that the carnal mind is dominant in the Church as to its external administration; but is the *destruction* of the Church or its *reforma-*

tion the proper aim of the professed follower of Christ? Because the carnal mind is dominant in the external administration of the Church, does it follow that *Church teaching* must therefore be erroneous, and that *Church principles* ought to be repudiated? Is there one Nonconformist in ten thousand who has *prayerfully* investigated the Church's teaching, or who has any conception of the nature of Church principles, beyond what he may have gathered from the misconceptions of unconverted Churchmen? And has the Nonconformist any Scriptural ground for his conviction, that external unity is a non-essential, and that division does not contravene the will and purpose of God and apostolical injunctions; or, for his favourite theory, that the Church of Christ consists of all the converted in our numberless religious communities, and of individual believers scattered throughout the world? As these and similar misconceptions are defiantly put forth and acted upon, which are so contrary to the Churchman's belief, and so abhorrent to his sense of right, and to that early mental bias which has all the strength of a rooted conviction, is it matter of wonder that he is prejudiced against the Nonconformist's testimony on the subject of *vital truth*, and that he regards Evangelical teaching with suspicion, and as the creed of schismatics? The unconverted Churchman is both to be blamed and

pitied. Doubtless he has resisted the leadings of the Spirit and the drawings of the Father, else he would have realized the saving power of Evangelical truth, as well as the Nonconformist. At the same time, there is no denying the fact, that the conduct of Nonconformists in taking a position antagonistic to the Church, in repudiating Church principles without taking the trouble of investigating their nature and object, and in their reckless violation of the obligations to unity, has aroused the Churchman's prejudices against Evangelical teaching, instead of recommending it to his acceptance, and have led him to be uncharitably observant of the inconsistencies and shortcomings of religious professors, which have multiplied the stumbling-blocks in his way towards the reception of saving truth. On the other hand, it must also be admitted that, while the substitution of divisive principles for the principle of unity cannot be justified, and is the less excusable in those who boast of their adherence to the Word of God, the abuse of the Church's services, the misconceptions and perversions of her teaching by unconverted men, her unspiritual ministrations, and the dominance of the carnal mind in her external administration, come in for their share of the blame; for these unquestionably have driven the spiritual mind to adopt expedients and modes of thought and argu-

ment in defence of a dissenting position, which was originally occupied under the pressure of a supposed or real necessity.

It would be better for all parties, if *all of us* were groaning under the burden of existing evils, instead of boasting ourselves against each other, and contending that we have right on our side, and that the wrong is only on the side of our opponents. If this state of mind could be induced, the remedy for all our differences and divisions would soon be discovered, for there is no other remedy than the exhibition and reception of higher and of deeper truths. The great want of the age and of the day is a right and higher conception of the nature and object of Christianity. Both the intellectual and the religious mind are restless on the subject of religion; and this, I trust, is an indication that the promise of "light at evening time" is about to be fulfilled. Throughout the exposition contained in the following letters I have endeavoured to give prominence to the all-important truth, that salvation from the wrath of God and the penalty of sin is not the grand *purpose* and *object* of our probationary state, but only a *preparation* for the pursuit of that object. Salvation is the first, the great necessity; but it is not the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Union with Christ, even as Christ is one with the Father, is

the high and glorious destiny for which we were originally created. The fall was *an accident* for which God has mercifully provided a remedy,—a remedy of which it is most easy to avail ourselves, *for it has only to be thankfully accepted by faith, without money and without price.* But neither the fall nor the remedy has altered the purpose of God, in respect to our original destiny. The *process* whereby man is made "a partaker of the Divine nature," has necessarily undergone a change, because of the fall. The subjection of the creaturely will in innocent Adam by obedience to the Divine will would have been rewarded, we are led to suppose, by permission to eat of the Tree of Life. The process of imparting the Divine life is *now* by a *regeneration*, which necessitates the death of the old Adam, *before* Christ, who is a quickening Spirit, can impart Himself to us as our regenerate life. And this is the law of the covenant of regeneration,—that as we die unto self, which is our creaturely life, by the renouncement of all that self feeds upon, in the same proportion do we become the fit recipients of the life of Christ. Of course the great life-long work of regeneration is only the work of the *saved.* Here the unconverted Churchman misses his way. He is always seeking for and hoping for sanctification, and attempting to do that work which is the condition of regeneration, *before* he has obtained

the blessing and powers of *justification*. He does not understand the evangelizing work of St. Paul, and the gospel proclamation, by which alone it ever has been and ever will be effected; for the Gospel of Christ, *simpliciter*, ever has been and ever will be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Thus it is that the Bible and the Prayer Book may actually be said to mislead him and confirm his misconceptions and delusion; for both the Gospels and the Prayer Book keep our high destiny and the work and conditions of regeneration,—*and not of justification*, —ever before us. Hence, in type, Noah is *before* Abraham. Hence, in the Church's teaching, the covenant of regeneration is *everywhere*, and justification is *nowhere*, saving in the eleventh Article, because the realization of the powers and blessings of justification is *presupposed before we come to Church privileges, Church worship, and the Church's teaching*. It is true that the child of Christian parents is admitted into the covenant of regeneration, and is thereby set apart, by way of covenant obligations, for its high calling and destiny, before it is capable of being the recipient of *saving faith*, upon which our justification depends. When the fact is seen in its true and proper light, there will be an end to all dispute about regeneration and infant baptism. Because, in the first place, the

child was born and exists for *regeneration*, and not simply for *justification;* which is only a *necessity because of the fall*, and it is right that its glorious destiny and high calling should from the first be kept before it; and secondly, it ought to be trained from its very infancy, in self-denial and world-renouncement, as the destined heir of God and the covenanted follower of Christ. And although there may be much of legality in such a course of training, still, it is the proper training for a Christian child—after Christ and not after the world. And it will be found that Christian culture and discipline, before a child is capable of justification, will prove of incalculable value after its justification, in facilitating the progress of the great life-long work of holy dying to self, which is the essential condition of our regeneration. For we must not forget that the whole system of Christianity was delivered to the Apostles,—yea, and they had the advantage of a three years' training in the family of Christ,—and even their ministerial commission was given to them,—*before the day of Pentecost.*

That baneful word, "*Non-essential,*" as applied to revealed truth, and the question,—"*Is it necessary?*" (which, be it observed, is one common subterfuge of the poor degraded soul, when urged to seek for pardon and acceptance with God) have done incalculable injury to the cause of truth, and

to the highest interests of religion. "External unity is not essential," says the sectarian,—for what? "Why, for our *salvation*." Here we have the innate selfishness of a religionism, which in these days is almost universal. Here is the acknowledgment that *salvation* is considered the grand aim and end of our state of probation. But this is utterly untrue. We are *saved* that we may be *regenerated*. We are *saved* that we may *die to our creaturely will*, and that we may be *recreated after "the image of Christ* in righteousness and true holiness." This is the *true* regeneration, and this is the *object* of the Baptismal or Christian Covenant, or, as it may be called, the *Covenant* of *Regeneration*. In the great work of subjugating our creaturely will to the will of God, that we may be united to Christ, as Christ is united to the Father, *obedience* in every matter is *essential* to our being perfected. Christ, our pattern, was *obedient* even to the death of the cross. His blood-shedding might have been otherwise effected, without impairing its atoning efficacy, for it is the shedding of blood which obtains for us the remission of sins; but His obedience was *perfected* by His submitting to the death of the cross. Our obedience in all things is the only means of bringing our creaturely will into submission to the will of God, which is the condition of our being regenerated, after the image of Christ.

Now it is God's will that *we* should be *one*, even as God and Christ are *one;* that we should be of one mind, and speak the same things; that there should be *no divisions* among us; and that we should be perfectly joined together in the same mind. Whoever he be, therefore who regards even external unity, or any other truth which reveals the will of God as a *non-essential*, has yet to learn the true nature and object of Christianity, and what is "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is one thing to be ever striving after the subjection of our creaturely will and after obedience to the will of God in all things, although we may be poor short-coming disciples of our blessed Lord; it is another thing, and indicates an entirely different state of heart and mind, to say —that "unity is a non-essential," and that "we may exercise our own discretion according to circumstances, regardless of any one revealed truth which directly or remotely conveys an expression of the will of God." Oh! that all might agree to abjure, *at once and for ever*, that fearfully selfish and self-willed word, "*non-essential*," with reference to the truth of God.

The unconverted Churchman says, "I do not deny that *some* may have an evidence of pardon and acceptance, but *is it necessary* for all?" What does this mean? Pardon which ensures our ac-

ceptance with God is the very first conscious step in our journey to heaven. It is true that baptized infants are under a special dispensation of blessing, but that dispensation ends with infancy—it can be no longer in force when they have attained the age of responsibility and are capable of exercising faith. Without the exercise of living faith, which is God's gift to the repentant sinner, the state of justification cannot be enjoyed, and the state of justification has its characteristic blessedness, as well as its spiritual powers. Now a sense of forgiveness and acceptance,—together with the joys of the Holy Ghost and the witness of the Spirit,—are actually to us the evidences of our justification. To the newly justified,—to the very "babe in Christ,"—St. John says, "I write unto you, little children, *because your sins are forgiven you;* I write unto you, little children, because *ye know the Father,*" as your *reconciled* Father and God. "Whosoever believeth in him," saith St. Peter, "receiveth remission of sins"; and St. Paul says, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the *forgiveness of sins*, and by him *all that believe* are justified from all things." "Now," as our great Apostle saith, "we have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God"; and St. John saith, "He that believeth

hath the witness in himself"; and our blessed Lord saith, "Every one that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"; and yet the unconverted Churchman says, "*Is it necessary* that every one should have a sense of forgiveness and acceptance"! If I am to be free from blood-guiltiness, I must answer, and through God's grace I have always answered, *it is absolutely necessary*—necessary for *salvation:* necessary no less for *Christian progress;* for we have "knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins," and "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation *to every one* that believeth." Oh! that never more might be heard that ignoble, that God-dishonouring question, "*Is it necessary for all?*"

Let me call the attention of both Churchmen and Nonconformists to the fact—that the terms, "*salvation,*" "*save,*" "*saved,*" etc., are of various application throughout the Word of God, even as they are in the incidents of common life. There is a salvation from the wrath of God and the penalty of sin, which Christ by His atoning sacrifice has obtained for us, and which is freely offered to *every sinner,* without money and without price. There is a salvation from the power and pollution of indwelling sin, which we need every moment. There is a salvation from the world, the flesh, and the

devil, which is to be wrought out with fear and trembling; and there is "an *eternal* salvation unto all them *that obey Christ*" (Heb. v. 9), a salvation which is "in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. ii. 10). The salvation without money and without price is altogether independent both of Church and sacraments. The Church requires that every unbaptized adult should possess this salvation, before he is admitted to baptism; and the condition of obtaining it is simply *repentance* and *faith*. As to the salvation unto eternal glory, which is the reward of obedience, it is my conviction that the Church is warranted by the very nature and object of Christianity, in asserting that "the sacraments are generally necessary" to that salvation which is the reward of the elect,—of those who follow the Lord fully, or who manifest the spirit, and are faithfully obedient to the self-sacrificing precepts of Christianity; for the Church, the Sacraments, and Christianity are, as I conceive, inseparable.

In conclusion, let me say to our nonconforming brethren—and I do it in all sincerity, and in the spirit of love—that I wish with all my heart that the preachers of the Gospel of salvation were a thousandfold more numerous than they are—I mean those who make the Gospel proclamation in the Spirit and with power; for evangelizing work

is the *first and greatest of all necessities;* and truly the harvest is great but the labourers are few. At the same time I must unflinchingly declare, that Church work only *begins* where evangelizing work *ends*, and that the Gospel of salvation is only a preparation for the efficacious reception of the Gospel of the kingdom. It is a sad thing to have to say that there are only here and there living epistles to testify the reality of the great work for which the Church was chiefly instituted; for there are few, very few, who are daily dying to self, and in whom the regeneration life after the image of Christ is being exemplified. As far as we can gather from the records of Christianity the number of the faithful and chosen—the *true elect* of God—has in every generation been comparatively small, while it is to be hoped that *the saved* have amounted to a number which no man can number. But although the great work of *re*-creation, or regeneration after the image of Christ, has been for the most part lost sight of by the present generation, and by too many of those which have preceded it—although, in fact, the members of the Church, generally speaking, have mistaken justification for regeneration, salvation for "the high calling of God in Christ," just as Nonconformists of every denomination have assuredly done—and although Nonconformists are far in advance of Churchmen in

respect of spiritual vitality, and are better acquainted with the first principles of our holy religion—yet, let not the Nonconformist deceive himself; the *members* of the Church in this or that generation are not *the* Church; their unfaithfulness to the cause of truth, to their own souls, to their high calling, and to God, does not make the truth of God either a lie or of none effect. So long as the Bible, the Sacraments, and the Prayer Book exist, they will be God's witnesses against every man, who heedlessly or wilfully confounds justification with regeneration, or salvation from the wrath of God and the penalty of sin with the prize of our high calling. Nonconformists do not see the Church. Its existing corruptions and defects—the accumulation of ages—have prejudiced their minds against an honest, studious, and prayerful investigation of its nature, and of the special purposes for which it was instituted. They have looked upon the things that *appear*, instead of diving beneath the surface and discovering the things that *are;* and my hope and prayer is, that the imperfect exposition, which is affectionately presented to them in the following letters, may be the means of opening their eyes to see the truth, and that they may far outstrip the writer in their investigation of the deeper things of God. Let them only cease to *confound* the two great spiritual realities, *justification* and *regenera-*

tion, which have little or nothing in common, and yet which are two parts of a consistent whole, which cannot be separated without doing irreparable injury to our own souls, ignoring and perverting the truth of God, and frustrating His highest and most gracious purposes respecting our eternal destiny. Let the light of the true regeneration be discerned, and then the Prayer Book will soon be revised, enlarged, improved, not by the rejection of those particular portions of it to which exception is at present taken, but by the enlargement of those very portions—by giving them more fulness of exposition, and greater richness and depth of expression: then will the very causes of our present differences and divisions become the means of a reunion which will never be dissolved.

THE PRAYER BOOK UNVEILED,

ETC.

LETTER I.

The will of God, the law of Christian conduct.

My dear Sir,

Nearly two years have elapsed since I formed the determination of addressing you on the subject of Christian unity, and I have only been prevented by ill health from carrying my purpose into effect. Through God's mercy I am again fit for work, and no kind of work can be attempted, which is more difficult and more needful than the restoration of unity among professing Christians. Unhappily, its necessity is not felt as it ought to be. Our lamentable and long continued differences and divisions have, naturally enough, induced and fostered misconceptions respecting unity, which are held, and acted upon, without misgivings or any consciousness of wrong. There seems to be no suspicion of the

fact that, by a righteous retribution, we are under the dominion of a divisive spirit. The religious mind of the day is not convicted of the sin of violating Christian precepts and of disregarding apostolical injunctions with regard to unity, and the enquiry,—What is the will of God respecting it? is actually foreign to the spirit of the age. At the same time, there is, undeniably, a very general desire for unity, although it does not proceed from the right principle, and is not very ardent. The agitations which our differences and divisions occasion tell us very plainly that there can be no peace, while the present state of things continues; and forewarn us of coming evils which it is the duty and interest of all parties to prevent. If men do not see that disunion is antichristian, yet they are made to feel that it is a disturbing element, doing the work of an enemy in every parish, and gathering strength for more disastrous conflicts. If indeed unity could be restored, in accordance with their own views and principles, it would be thankfully accepted by all, whose individual interests would not be affected, and whose narrow minded prejudices would not be offended by its restoration. Even for this much we ought to be thankful. But if unity is ever to be actually restored, it will only be done by God's special help, and this we cannot expect unless it be done in His own way. There

has been sin, and it must be acknowledged and put away. We must not come before God as men who have been grievously wronged, demanding our rights, but as those who have done wrong, entreating Him in His great mercy to put us right. Beyond all question there have been, and there are, grievous faults on the side of Nonconformists, as well as on the side of the Church. Both parties must be brought to see wherein they have erred, and both parties must humble themselves before God in that they have sinned against Him, against His truth, against the spirit and precepts of Christ, and against each other; and if through God's mercy, and by His grace, such a state of mind can be induced, there will remain no insurmountable obstacle in the way of the restoration of Christian unity.

Those who are travailing in spirit for the reunion of professing Christians, in accordance with the declared will of God, the dying prayer of our Lord, and the spirit and precepts of Christianity—and, blessed be God, there are a few, as there have ever been, who are bearing the burden of the Lord touching this matter,—are deeply indebted to the Bishop of Adelaide and yourself, for reviving attention with respect to this momentous subject. But the agitation for Liturgical Revision, which was immediately recommenced after the publication of your "Lights and Shadows of Church Life in Australia,"

is sufficient evidence, if evidence were wanting, that a great work requires to be done, in the way of reconciling our doctrinal differences, before there can be any approach towards unity between Churchmen and Nonconformists.

The good Bishop, whose honest manly zeal is worthy of all commendation, and who expresses his views with admirable clearness and ability, and in a most kindly and Christian-like spirit, begins at the end instead of the beginning, when he proposes or suggests certain terms of union which might possibly be accepted by both parties. You are evidently alive to the fact, that certain dogmas are to be found in the Prayer Book, which nonconformists as well as our Evangelical brethren within the National Church believe to be grave and noxious errors, while every good Churchman will defend them to the last extremity; and you seem to be perfectly aware that any attempt to ignore the teachings of the Prayer Book would either be successfully repelled, or lead to the disruption of the Church, and mayhap to civil commotion. You therefore recommend that we should accept the present state of things as inevitable, and proceed to make the best of it. Now if the present state of things be really inevitable, doubtless, "co-operation in good works and acts of joint worship," would render our position in reference to each other

less antichristian in appearance; and perhaps, as you suggest, it might be expedient that "such a first step should be taken, and that we should wait for time and providence to evolve the conditions of a more complete union, whenever that might be possible."

But how can any state of things be inevitable, which is contrary to the will of God, which violates Christian precepts, and contravenes the very spirit and the highest purposes of Christianity? It is the declared will of God that we all should be one, even as God and Christ are one; and it is the Spirit of God who speaks through the Apostle when he says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be *no divisions* among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." In the light of this class of truth—and the book of God is full of it—would it not be a setting of ourselves above God, were we to say in effect, that, under existing circumstances, a full and entire obedience to His will is too high an aim for us—a demand that cannot be met; that, for the present, we can only agree to differ? Dare we assert that our divisions have become absolute necessities, and that therefore, in the exercise of our discretion, without regard to His revealed will,

we must accept the present state of things as inevitable, and proceed to make the best of it? This is a way of speaking to God, which, I am sure, is just as abhorrent to your own mind as it is to mine. Comprehending, as doubtless you do, the apparently insuperable difficulties which must be overcome before the unity which God requires can be wrought out, you throw out the suggestion that Churchmen and Nonconformists should make approaches to each other, in a way which you conceive to be practicable, as a first step, and only as a first step, towards the consummation of a more perfect unity.

There is much in this suggestion to commend it to the lovers of peace. It would be at least a breaking down of the outward partition wall which separates the Churchman from the Nonconformist; and it might be hoped, that unrestricted communion would lead to a better understanding of each other's views and principles. For my own part, I have never regarded preaching as a privilege or duty which exclusively belongs to the official ministry. Every man who has obtained remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit is able to explain the way of salvation to his fellow sinners, and woe be to him if he does not do so! We may call it preaching, or we may give it any other name, but the privilege or duty, for it is both, is in accordance with the very instincts of the spiritual life. Where

there is spiritual life, there is ever the desire to propagate it. Moreover, there is a zeal for the glory of God and a compassion for perishing sinners which incite the saved to promote the work of salvation. The restrictive laws which men have devised in order to restrain the instincts of the spiritual life, have, through God's mercy, ever been abortive; and until the Church shall purge herself of the fearful sin of preventing saved souls from proclaiming saving truth, dissent will increase, and spiritual death will continue to reign within her pale. Holding such sentiments, it is not likely that I should object in principle to co-operate with Nonconformists in evangelizing work. At the same time it is my conviction that the restoration of unity would be very little advanced, if at all, were the existing restrictions done away. It is true there might be an occasional exchange of pulpits between Evangelicals and Nonconformists, but this would only tend to widen the existing breach between Churchmen and Evangelicals within the Church. I freely admit that, with regard to evangelical truth, so called, and evangelizing work, *per se*, the generality of Evangelicals in the Church and out of the Church are right, and that, as generally, Churchmen are theoretically, practically, yea, and fatally, in error. On the other hand, I am equally convinced, that both Evangelicals and Nonconformists have not

only defective conceptions, but very dangerous misconceptions, of what are called Church truths, — truths which include and comprise the very essentials of Christianity. These conceptions and misconceptions cannot fail to effect less or more seriously their exhibition of Evangelical truth; and consequently, even those Churchmen, who have realized the saving power of Evangelical truth, must have conscientious objections to the giving of their sanction to what they believe to be defective and erroneous teaching. It is simply the fact, that Churchmen and Evangelicals within the Church do not draw together; how then can we expect that intercommunion with Nonconformists should lead to any important results?

We must not forget that the restoration of unity is a matter in which God and His truth are concerned, as well as Churchmen and Nonconformists. Our differences and divisions, which are evils in themselves, and the result of evil, may nevertheless subserve the cause of truth; for God will not leave himself without a witness to any one of His truths. Now every enlightened Nonconformist must see that Churchmen are not God's witnesses for the vital doctrine of justification by faith. They may acknowledge it in the letter, because it is a part of the Church's creed, but they do not as a body recognize the saving power of faith. It is a lamentable fact,

that the clergy of a certain school have been for centuries, and are at this moment, the most strenuous opponents of evangelizing work. And why do they oppose it? Because they believe that we are placed in the state of grace and salvation in and by Baptism, and therefore, that although we may need repentance and amendment, we are not really unbelievers, and do not require conversion. Now, although I deeply deplore our divisions, and while God lends me breath will do all that I can to put an end to them, yet I thank God that Nonconformists constitute so great a cloud of witnesses to the necessity of conversion, and to the saving efficacy of faith. On the other hand, every enlightened Churchman must see that Evangelicals and Nonconformists are not God's witnesses for sacramental grace. They neither comprehend the high and glorious purposes for which the sacraments were instituted, nor have they any just conception of the special grace which they are appointed to communicate. While therefore I lament that the generality of Churchmen are only witnesses, of a legal type, for sacramental grace, and have very defective conceptions of the kind of grace which the sacraments are appointed to communicate, yet, I thank God, that they so earnestly contend for the truth that grace is communicated by the sacra-

ments, and that it was for this high purpose they were instituted.

In our attempts to reconcile existing differences, and to heal existing divisions, we must take care that we proceed in accordance with the mind and will of God, else all our endeavours will be fruitless. We are all less or more under the bondage of our systems, and it is the truth alone which can set us free. Unhappily, there is in every denomination, a very respectable and very numerous class of men, who complacently tell us that their religious principles are fixed, and that they do not wish to hear anything that would have a tendency to unsettle their minds. Such men have yet to learn that advancement in light and knowledge is not a just cause of reproach, but the business of the Christian life. Surely it indicates either an indifference to the high and momentous interests of religion, or a sinful indulgence of the spirit of pride, self-will, and self-sufficiency, when persons contentedly set themselves down in a position of their own choosing, without giving themselves the trouble of searching the Scriptures, and prayerfully inquiring whether the position of their choice is in accordance with the will of God and the spirit and precepts of Christianity: and that too, while our differences and divisions are a crying reproach to our common Christianity, and while

the whole body of the Church Universal is suffering by their effects. They tell us, that this and that truth or doctrine are non-essentials, upon which we may safely agree to differ; that it does not matter much to what denomination we may belong, if we are truly converted to God and lead a pious life; and that, when we get to heaven, it will never be asked whether we are Churchmen or Dissenters.

Now it is this innate, dominant, openly avowed, and yet unconscious selfishness in the religion of the day which is so distressing to the truly Christian mind. It is in fact the popular creed of our times that, if we are only saved, all is right. How then will the men of one truth and their enthusiastic adherents bear to be told, that such a religion has no claim whatever to the title of Christianity, and that justification by faith is only a preparation, though a necessary one, for the religion which our blessed Lord taught and exemplified. The mind which the Spirit of God has enlightened sees very clearly, that we are saved, that we may be made and become the loving and obedient children of the Most High God, that our calling is a high and a holy calling, and that eternal union with Christ, even as Christ is one with God, is both the prize of our high

calling, for which we are to strive, and the glorious destiny for which we were created.

Our Lord, as man, had a creaturely will as we have; and "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." He tells us that He was sent into the world, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him; and that it was His meat and His drink to do the will of His Father in Heaven. We too are only Christians indeed as we imitate Christ in this; as we renounce our own will, and lovingly obey the will of God. We all know, or at least we all ought to know, that it is His will that there should be no divisions among us, and that we should all speak the same thing; in short that we should be one, even as God and Christ are one. And where is our Christianity and our loving child-like obedience, if we make light of the will of God with regard to Christian unity, and call it a non-essential? As to difference of opinion on confessedly fundamental doctrines, it is true that there are many apparent contradictions *in the Bible*, but, blessed be God, there are no real ones. Doubtless, it is a part of our probationary work and discipline to harmonize them. We have not only "to mortify our members which are upon the earth," but to bring our naturally wilful, proud, and discursive

minds into subjection to the mind and will of God. Most certainly we have no right to say that this and that doctrine or truth are non-essentials; and that therefore, we may treat them as such, and agree to differ about them; especially as there is an "anointing which teacheth all things," and which we may receive in greater measure, if we earnestly and perseveringly seek for it.

I am not afraid of being able, by God's help, to harmonize the doctrine of justification by faith, which is the fundamental and central truth of all evangelical systems, with the sacrament and covenant of Baptism, which is the foundation of all Church teaching; although I heartily wish that I had more divine illumination, more grace, more love, and more ability in every respect for the work. The great obstacle to the restoration of Christian unity, and to every thing else which tends to promote the glory of God and the well-being of His Church is this poor, blind, sinful, self-willed nature of ours, which our justification by faith does not effectually cure. As our Ninth Article has it,—the evil "infection of our nature, doth remain even in them that are regenerate, called in the Greek, *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, which is not subject to the

law of God." But this is an enemy, of whose existence the religionists of the day do not seem to be conscious; and it is a strange language to them, when they are told, that the work of regeneration can only progress, as this *phronema sarkos* is destroyed. We must go to the root of the matter at once, for we need not expect a radical cure, unless the true seat and nature of the disease is discovered, and here it is,—*the supremacy of self;* and it is the very truth, that Christianity, as to its nature and proper work, is just so far practically ignored, as the knowledge of self and self-conquest are disregarded.

I wish I could put the following extract from Mr. Gladstone's great and thoughtful work on "The State in its relations with the Church," into the hands, heads, and hearts of every Churchman and Nonconformist throughout the land: "The origin of evil in this world of ours was the infraction of the established rule of reference to a supreme and single will. Our first parents were not content to derive, from a source that lay out of themselves, the ultimate ground and reason and the definitive criterion of their acts: they would seek for themselves another image of good: they would entertain it in the mind under a different conception: they would be the judges of its nature, and would not have God

to be the judge for them. One act disorganised the earth and all its moral destinies. It constituted as many new centres, as many rebellious and divided systems of action, as there should be human beings; atomic centres of limited and petty influences, but without subordination to Him from whom they had derived even the power to rise in revolt against Him. *The actual law of human conduct before the fall, was out of man himself and was in God. The actual law of human conduct after the fall, was in man himself and was out of God.* He had a sense of right and wrong; but he did not ground it upon the divine command. It was not that he thought, I will repudiate the good and worship the evil; it was not even that he thought, I will abandon the good to follow the pleasurable; it was the form and criterion, not the matter of conduct, that he appeared to himself to change; the language of his action was, 'I will do that which seemeth good to myself, instead of that which seemeth good to God;' or, 'I will require of God that, that which He enjoins upon my practice, should submit and approve itself to my understanding.' Thus, therefore, in the midst of God's fair creation, was there planted, wherever there stood a man, a perpetually prolific principle of derangement; of separate, self-centred action, spent ineffectually upon objects that did not enter

into the design of the universe, nor contribute, unless by opposition and revulsion, to the fulfilment of its appointed work. While, however, it pleased the mercy of God, to design a provision for the redemption of mankind by His Son, to be accomplished when the fulness of time should have come; so He likewise ordained certain conditions of the human existence, which, as intermediate expedients and instruments of a secondary discipline, should both check the progress of selfishness, so far at least, as to prevent the disease from arriving at its crisis, by establishing a counteracting principle, and should likewise prepare men to recognize the higher truths taught in divine revelation, and supply them with real, though partial, approximations to the true law of their being." He goes on to say, that a common life in the family, in the tribe, in the nation, is God's appointed means of counteracting the disorganizing agency of the law of self-worship; and that the usurping principle of self-direction is repressed and restrained by the knitting and blending together of the lives of men in domestic and social organisations. A common life necessitates the surrender of the individual will—and what is sacrificed is thrown into a common fund; in proportion to the extent of this surrender of the individual will, unity of being, instead of diversity, is established, in respect

of everything that gives to being its interest, dignity or value. Hence the original evil is so far redressed, and a preparation is made for its fundamental and complete redress; the taking of something away from self, prepares for restoring of self to God.

In this extract, one of the high purposes for which the Church was instituted is prominently brought before us, namely, the counteraction of the usurping principle of self-will—the subjection of the human will to the will of God; but by our divisions we have utterly subverted this gracious purpose of our most loving Father. Divisive principles and the divisive spirit are dominant, and, as a natural and judicial consequence, men professing Christianity do not realize the fact, that to deny self is its great distinctive and fundamental precept—the all-important and most difficult work of the Christian life. They live and act, unconsciously, under the dominance of the usurping principle of self-will; and there are thousands of converted persons, of whom we might expect some apprehension of Christian truth, who could not give an intelligent answer to the simple question, What is meant by self-denial? This utter blindness to the nature and proper work of Christianity is the legitimate fruit of our divisions, and of the lamentably defective

systems of teaching, which separation (from the Church) has engendered; and the guilt of so much spiritual damage and ignorance is less attributable to the unconscious victims of a desolating evil, than to us Churchmen, who have perpetuated, instead of removing, the causes which rendered separation a supposed necessity.

It can do good to no one, nor can it serve any righteous purpose, to call sin of any kind by a softer name. And it is the very truth, that, so long as our divisions continue, and their causes are suffered to exist, we are living in a state of rebellion against the will of God, and are violating the precepts, yea, and sinning against the spirit, of our common Christianity. Whether we be Churchmen or Dissenters, we all have our share in the common guilt. Recriminations are not justifications, and hitherto they have only done harm, and are never likely to do any good. There is no need of going so far as the origin of our divisions, to bring home the charge of a sinful disregard to the will of God, to an enlightened and impressible conscience. It is an undeniable fact, that, although there has been plenty of envying and strife and bitterness, and of that kind of controversy which only renders controversies interminable, there has not been, in our day, one honest, earnest, loving, Christ-like attempt to reconcile our differences and to heal our divisions.

The question will be asked from a thousand quarters—What can be done? My answer is, Let all pray who can pray, that "He who maketh men to be of one mind in a house" may pardon the sin of our divisions, and open our understanding that we may understand the Scriptures; for the neglect of the Word of God, which we have so plentifully among us, (I mean of its prayerful, and thoughtful study,) is one of our great national sins. But especially let us pray, that our minds may be open to conviction in reference to the doctrines which are held by our opponents, who are as earnest lovers of truth as ourselves, and who perchance may be God's witnesses for the very doctrines to which our opposition, occasioned by misapprehension or prejudice, may have blinded us. This will be a good beginning, if the recommendation be generally acted upon, and sincerely carried out. And then, in all fairness, as a second step towards the restoration of unity, let the Prayer Book be carefully studied, and with prayer; for the Spirit's help is as much needed to understand it as to understand the Bible. Rightly or wrongly, it has been accused of being one cause of our divisions, and it is regarded by many as the chief obstacle to our reunion; hence the outcry for its revision. Now, believing, as I do, that this very imperfectly studied, (when studied at all,) this greatly misunderstood, and this much

abused Prayer Book, contains and exhibits to the enlightened lover of truth the right and only possible ground of Christian unity, I must demand for it a fair trial before it is condemned. In my next letter I shall therefore freely enter into the question of revision, though not in the way of controversy, which I believe is just as distasteful to you as to myself, and see whether the expositions which I am prepared to give, are such as ought to satisfy the objectors to its teaching.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER II.

The Revision of the Liturgy.

MY DEAR SIR,

With a view to the solution of our difficulties, for they will never be got over by compromise, and to meet some of the leading arguments which the revisionists of the day have brought forward, let us begin with the very important question,—Is our Liturgy really in fault, and does it therefore require revision? Or is the Book of Common Prayer, as a whole, God's witness to the unity of divine truth, against the divisive theories of the High Church and Evangelical parties? And may it not be true, that

both parties have formed very erroneous conceptions respecting the teaching of the Prayer Book, and that they are actually contending against each other's misconceptions, instead of teachably endeavouring to master the harmonious system of divine truth which the Prayer Book contains? I suppose each party will unhesitatingly say, that the book contains very much truth, and not a little objectionable matter, which ought to be corrected or expunged. Evangelicals would put up with the book, if certain expressions in the occasional services were altered; and High Churchmen would like to have the Eleventh Article, and especially the word "only," omitted altogether, and some of the others, mayhap, so strengthened or modified that they might better accord with their own views. They would rather, however, that the book should remain as it is, than that Evangelicals should obtain what they are seeking by a revision.

Is then the Prayer Book a jumble of truth and error, and was it of set purpose made a broad platform, where those who agreed to differ might not have the power of ejecting each other? If even this were the case, which I deny, the revision of the Prayer Book to meet the views of both parties is simply an impossibility. The Churchman will never consent to the sacrifice of that class of truths which is obnoxious to the Evangelical, neither will

the Evangelical let go one iota of the truth which is objectionable to Churchmen. If the proposal were made that there should be two Prayer Books (upon which principle the Episcopalians in Scotland seem at present to be acting), and that every clergyman might use the one which best accorded with his own views and those of his congregation, such a proposal might at least claim the merit of common sense; but then the supremacy of self-will would be acknowledged, and the divisive principle have its triumph; that is to say, divisive principles would become the law of the Church's action, instead of the principle of unity, in direct oppposition to the will of God.

For more than twenty years I have laboured hard, and written much, to convict unconverted Churchmen of their fatal error in rejecting evangelical truth, and of their arrogant blindness in designating it the Lutheran heresy; but I have also been compelled to bear my testimony to the fact, that Evangelicals, by ignoring what are called Church truths, theoretically, and I fear practically, ignore the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. Hence, instead of being really the followers of Christ, they take their rest in justification by faith, as the spiritual sons of Abraham, who, St. Paul tells us, is "the father of all them that believe." Thus, justification by faith and its powers, benefits,

and fruits, which are the preparations for Christianity, are mistaken for the reception and manifestation of the life of Christ, or Christianity itself. Now, however strong the conviction of both parties may be that they have all the right on their side, and that their opponents are altogether in the wrong, I hope I shall be able, by God's help, to shew that the Book of Common Prayer throughout, with a wisdom far beyond that of unaided man, and perhaps even without the conscious intention of its compilers, witnesses to the unity and harmony of the two classes of truth, which the contending parties have arrayed against each other to their own fearful detriment, and to the great injury of the highest interests of religion.

Blessed be God, the Prayer Book is not the book of a party; and should it ever become so, which is most improbable, it will be an evil day for the Church, for religion, for the nation, and for the world. Party men must come to it in a humble and teachable spirit, and there they will learn the unity of divine truth; it will not go to them, else our National Church would cease to be the pillar and ground of the truth. Those who study it most deeply, wonder the most at the amazing wisdom with which truths are harmonised within it, which have a seeming contrariety; and all its expositions are given, "not in the words which man's wisdom

teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." From Advent to the last Sunday after Trinity, we have every doctrine and precept contained in the Word of God brought before us, in the most beautiful, interesting, and edifying order. In no other human production is the proportion of truth so jealously preserved. If, in the gospel for the day, we have some self-denying Christian precept, enforced apparently in the language of legality, we are sure to have, along with it, in the epistle the freeness of divine grace, our dependance upon the aid of the Spirit, or the glory of our sonship as the children of God; while the proper lessons generally contain some striking illustration of the teaching for the day, or suggestive subject matter less or more directly bearing upon it, for our direction, warning, comfort, or edification. *The Book of Common Prayer is a very uncommon book.* It is little understood by the thousands who use it as a manual of devotion, and it is not understood at all by the tens of thousands who condemn it, simply because from their childhood they have been prejudiced against it.

The Prayer Book is God's witness both for the grace of justification, and for the grace of the sacraments. And how, it may be asked, does it manage to reconcile them? The answer is a very

short one, and yet it gives us the key to the solution of most of our difficulties. It reconciles them by never confounding them with each other, and yet by exhibiting them in united and harmonious operation. The Prayer Book is, therefore, not only God's witness for the two kinds of grace, but it is also His witness against the conflicting theories of Churchmen and Evangelicals; for however much these may differ in other respects, they invariably fall into the same error of confounding the grace of justification and the grace of the sacraments. Now, the truth is, they are not only perfectly distinct, but they are altogether different, both in their nature and fruits; they are to be obtained by different means and on different conditions; and they have entirely different objects. The Prayer Book always and unequivocally declares that we are justified by faith, and by faith only. It never says that the adult is justified in or by Baptism; neither does it allege, or give any ground for the allegation, that the baptized child is placed in the state of justification by Baptism. But we shall touch as little as possible at present upon the spiritual condition of baptized infants, as the subject will have the fullest exposition we can give it, in its own place.

The state of justification, and the means by which it is attained, are so clearly described in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that really

no ground is left for controversy on the subject. We are told that "Abraham believed God, and that *his faith* was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith is counted for righteousness.* Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The Apostle proceeds to tell us, that this has nothing to do with Circumcision, and most certainly it has just as little to do with Baptism. Seeing, then, it is faith which is the instrumental means of our justification, and that it is *our faith* which is imputed to us for righteousness, how can a child be justified who is incapable of faith? But so tenaciously do some men cling to the theory, that infants are justified in and by Baptism, that it has actually been alleged, that the germ of faith is given in Baptism, and that, under proper tutorage, it grows with the child's growth and strengthens with its strength. I need hardly say that unconscious faith is simply an absurdity, for a living or saving faith implies both the exercise of the intellect, and the affections of the heart. It is "*with the heart*" that we believe

unto salvation. Besides, the possession of unconscious faith, if such a thing be conceivable, would be of no avail, for it is not the possession, but the exercise of faith, which justifies—it is not he who hath faith is justified, but "he that believeth;" and therefore, if a child even had faith in germ, it is incapable of exercising it, and therefore, to allege that a child is justified, is just to allege that an effect is produced without its cause. In short, whoever asserts that we are justified in and by Baptism, betrays his ignorance of the principles of God's remedial economy, contradicts the uniform testimony of Scripture, and sets *his opinion* above *the experience* of all true believers.

As then the Prayer Book declares, in accordance with the Word of God, and our own experience, that we are justified by faith, and by faith only, let us proceed to ascertain what it means when it says, that we are regenerated in and by Baptism. Now it certainly does mean, in the first place, that justification and regeneration are two very different things; and that they are to be attained by two very different means; and on very different conditions. When a sinner comes to God for justification, he is heavily laden, for he brings all his sins with him. Christ died for him, and purchased salvation at the price of his own blood for him, *because* he is a sinner, and as a poor lost sinner he

comes to Christ to receive the salvation which has been purchased for him. But when we come to be baptized, we come, not as unbelieving sinners, not as sinners dead in trespasses and sins, but *as believers;* and we all know, or ought to know, that "all *that believe* are justified from all things." We come to enter into solemn covenant with God; and, to be in a position to do so, implies that we have both been reconciled to God, and have been restored to spiritual life. We not only profess our faith in Christ, and our belief in his Word, but we solemnly covenant to renounce the world, to resist the devil, and to crucify the flesh, and obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life; and let it be observed, that all this covenanting is to be done before the act of Baptism is performed. Am I then making an unreasonable demand, when I ask that there may be an end at once and for ever to the confounding of justification, and baptismal regeneration, as it is held and taught by the Prayer Book? For this has been the cause of most of our perplexities and differences. We are not bound to concern ourselves as to what some, or many unconverted Churchmen may allege; for unconverted men cannot be expected to have very clear views of spiritual things, which can only be spiritually discerned; but let us hope that Evangelicals and Nonconformists,

who ought to be converted men, will no longer conceive, and pertinaciously assert, that when the Prayer Book speaks of regeneration, it means justification. It will not do to say, Let us admit it for the sake of argument. I am not arguing but stating a fact; and whereinsoever my exposition may seem to fail, thus far at least it is unanswerable, and therefore so much good and tenable ground is gained; for we must remember, that it is not the theory of unconverted Churchmen that is upon its trial, but the Prayer Book: and it shall not be my fault if the one be mistaken for the other.

And now, let me say, before we enter upon the subject of baptismal regeneration which has been so long and fruitlessly debated and is so little understood, that the light and life of Christ, who is the light and life of the world, as they are exhibited in the teaching of the Prayer Book, is so very far above the views and experience of both Churchmen and Evangelicals, that I never felt more deeply my own insufficiency and my need of God's help, than I do at this moment. The task lies before me of expounding a system of Divine truth, which is as different in its nature from all the systems which have been set up in opposition to it, as it is higher in its objects and conditions. Yet its very exposition may be looked upon by some as an attempt to subvert, while its real effect (thank God) must be

to supplement and replenish our common Theology and the popular teaching of the day.

It is a bold but very just remark of the late Frederick Robertson of Brighton (whose dangerous errors on vital points of doctrine are deeply to be deplored) that, "whenever opposite views are held with warmth by religious-minded men, we may take for granted that there is some higher truth which embraces both. All high truth is the union of two contradictories. Men of equal intelligence and religious zeal are ready to sacrifice all to assert and to deny the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. And the truth I believe will be found, not in some middle, moderate, timid doctrine, which skilfully avoids extremes, but in a truth larger than either of these opposite views, which is the basis of both, and which really is that for which each party tenaciously clings to its own view, as to a matter of life and death." Now whatever else the exposition I am about to give may be accounted, it is at least a confirmation of the statement, and a somewhat singular verification of the prediction, made by a writer of transcendent ability, but with whose religious views it is impossible for me to have any sympathy.

I want to gain the confidence both of your mind and heart, that you may receive what I have to say in the spirit of love, and give it that thoughtful

consideration which the subject demands, and which your powerful mind is capable of doing; therefore, I entreat you to dismiss at once the suspicion, if perchance it has arisen, that I have some new doctrine to propound, or that I imagine that I have made a discovery of some new truth which all before me have failed to discern. I am merely going to explain, as God may enable me, the highest of all doctrines and the most glorious of all revealed truths in the language of Scripture, instead of adopting the terms which have been used in describing the self-same doctrine, and the self-same truth, by the fathers, and by our best Evangelical divines; because I consider that the pregnant expressions of inspiration give an accuracy and depth to our conceptions, which the terms that have been commonly used fail to convey.

All theologians have marked the distinction between *imputed* righteousness, which we receive, through faith, at our justification, and *inherent* righteousness, which is wrought in us by the Spirit after our justification. Now, instead of using the comparatively modern term—Inherent Righteousness, or the patristic phrase—God bearer, or the stock word of the spiritualists—The Interior Life, let us return to the original and scriptural expression—"CHRIST IN US," which is at once definite, distinctive, and perfectly accurate. In fact, it gives

us the only right and full conception of the nature of regeneration. We find, that the reception of Christ is constantly represented in Scripture, as truly a receiving of something new, and not *the mere reformation or sanctification* of our natural faculties. It is quite true that the blood of Christ washes and cleanses the guilty sinner; and it is also true, that the Spirit influences, enlightens, sanctifies, and comforts believers; yea, and dwells in their hearts, and that their very bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; but we must not confuse the Holy Spirit with Christ in the work of regeneration, as is almost always done. Our original corruption consists, not in the evil of our natural faculties, for they have no moral character, and are neither good nor evil, saving only that they were good when created, as being suitable to the purposes of their being. The corruption consists in the superadded principle of evil,—the "sin that dwelleth in us,"—the principle which became inherent in Adam by the fall, and which is perpetuated to us, governing the will, and perverting all the faculties of our nature. Now the ameliorating principle, which is infinitely more than a mere antidote, is also a superaddition to our original nature, and is perfectly analogous to the corruptive superaddition. The regenerating gift consists, not in the cleansing or sanctifying of our natural faculties, although this

is undoubtedly a necessary preparation for the reception of the gift, but in the imparting to us, and incorporation with us of the principle of holiness inherent in Christ—the second Adam; and from him, transmitted by the Spirit, to those who are prepared and capable recipients;—a principle, which, according to the measure in which it is received ("for the gift of Christ" is given by measure, Eph. iv. 7,) displaces its rival principle of evil until it dispossesses it, and makes us altogether its own. Thus, the regenerate or "new man is CREATED, (not born of the Spirit,) in conformity with God's will, (Κατὰ Θεὸν) after the image of Christ his Creator, in righteousness and true holiness;" having a superadded principle of holiness which Adam never had —even Christ, who is both God and man; for God and man, let it be remembered, make one Christ. I desire to give prominence to the great truth, which is either not known or overlooked by the generality of religious professors, that the regenerating gift, or the principle of holiness, superadded to our nature, is not the Holy Spirit, but the second Adam—Christ Himself, who is a quickening Spirit, and who has life in Himself. Christ Himself is the holiness which He gives. Unsanctified reason may ask, How can Christ transmit Himself to us? I answer, that although the glorified body of Christ is in heaven, His complex person, which is both Divine

and human, possesses all the Divine powers and prerogatives unimpaired; and thus, although His manhood, simply as such, be restricted by the law of place, His person is unlimited in energy and presence. It is not the Eternal Son only who is Divine, and Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, but Christ also—God and man is Divine, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent: and surely the mystery of godliness, whereby Christ, by a true omnipresence, incorporates Himself with His faithful followers, need not be considered more mysterious than the mystery of iniquity, by which evil is incorporated with our nature. Both combinations are alike mysterious, and beyond our consciousness. For, as a very thoughtful writer expresses it, whose line of argument I have followed, "it passes in a region to which consciousness cannot attain."

Throughout the Word of God the distinction is clearly made; and all who diligently study the Word, under the enlightening influence of the Spirit of God, will easily discern it, between our being in Christ for justification, and Christ being in us for regeneration. But it is greatly to be deplored, that so many who are converted to God, instead of labouring to increase in knowledge and virtue, and going on unto perfection, remain in their spiritual babyhood, and abide in the "principles of the doctrine of Christ," which they are commanded

to leave. These are the unteachable, self-satisfied persons, constituting a very large class, whose opposition we have most to dread, in our attempt to bring about the reunion of professing Christians, by expounding the higher doctrines of Christianity; for they will neither themselves investigate truth, nor tolerate expositions which rise above their low and restricted conceptions, and exhibit the true standard of Christian holiness. But we must not suffer the Word of God either to be degraded or perverted; and its language, on this the highest and most glorious of its doctrines, is, as might be expected, most clear and definite. "Know ye not your own selves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates;" "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His; but if *Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." "As ye have *received Christ Jesus the Lord*, so walk ye in Him." "I am crucified with Christ," saith St. Paul, "nevertheless live, yet not I, *but Christ liveth in me*." "When *Christ, who is our life*, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "The riches of the glory of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God from ages and from generations, is now made manifest to His saints, which is, *Christ in you*, the hope of glory." "My little children," saith St. Paul to the Gala-

tians, "I travail in birth again *until Christ be formed in you.*" And in speaking of his own experience, he says, "for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, *that I may win Christ;*" surely *not as a Saviour,* for this he had done long ago, but, "that he might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if, by any means, he might attain to the resurrection of the dead;" and therefore, he says, in another place, not only that "he dies daily," but that he is "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that *the life also of Jesus* might be made manifest in his body;" for he adds, "we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that *the life also of Jesus* might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Besides this testimony from the writings of the great Apostle, we find these solemn and blessed words in our Lord's dying supplication for His followers throughout all ages, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; *I in them,* and thou in

me, that they may be made perfect in one." It is, in very deed, the self-same life which flows through the vine into the branches.

In perfect accordance with this glorious truth, the Prayer Book exhorts us always to remember, that "Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, *and to be made like unto Him;*" and again, it says, when with a lively faith we partake of the holy sacrament of our Lord's Supper, "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood; we dwell in Christ, *and Christ in us;* we are one with Christ, and Christ with us;" and we therefore pray, "that we, receiving these Thy creatures of bread and wine, according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, may be *partakers of His most blessed body and blood;*" and that, not only "our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood," but that, "we may evermore dwell in Him, *and He in us.*" Where do we find such teaching, save in the Bible and in the Prayer Book? Indeed, the lack of it, in all sectarian systems, has led to this fearful result, that the adherents of such systems have substituted justification for regeneration, salvation for union with Christ; and have thus theoretically and practically

ignored the highest object of the Incarnation, the higher doctrines of Christianity, and the high and glorious destiny of the redeemed family of God.

The late Archer Butler, the master-mind of his day, and indeed the master-mind of the century so far as it is gone, in shewing the difference between justification and regeneration, has exhibited with amazing perspicuity the true nature of this higher union between Christ and the living members of His body. He says in effect, our holiness is referable to Christ, not merely as imputed to us by Him, (of this I am not at present going to speak,) but also through that gift of Himself, which is the fruit of His Incarnation and victory. Twice has our nature been entered by powers above itself. The element of sin, though inwrought in human nature, is yet essentially distinct from it, and foreign to it; and its government is an usurpation. The Apostle saith, "If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, *but sin that dwelleth in me.*" As the descendants of the first Adam, we have the principle or element of sin dwelling in us, and mysteriously incorporated with our nature, and yet distinct from us. Then, there is the agency of Satan, through whose unceasing energy sin acquires its power and operation. Strictly analogous to this mystery of iniquity, is the mystery of godliness. Christ, the second Adam, who is holiness itself,

who is a quickening Spirit, and has life in and of Himself, is inwrought in regenerate nature, and in a manner consubstantiated with the human soul, although perfectly distinct from it; so that it is as true that Christ dwelleth in us, as that sin dwelleth in us. The Holy Spirit is the agent, through whose energy Christ is imparted to us, as a new principle of life, and gradually formed and strengthened in us, just as the principle of evil is expelled or destroyed,—so as to become the very life of the soul, and the inherent cause of a Christ-like spirit, of interior purity, and of a loving and self-sacrificing obedience. The analogy is perfect; and if any man of spiritual intelligence will take the trouble to master it, he will have no difficulty in discerning the difference between the state of justification, in which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and the domination of sin is prevented by the indwelling and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and the state of regeneration, in which the creaturely will is subjected to the will of Christ, by the denial, conquest, and renouncement of self. In this last state Christ is actually incorporated in us, and mysteriously, but really, consubstantiated with our nature; so that we may truly say, according to our measure of progress, that we live not, but Christ liveth in us. For the regenerate are so joined unto the Lord as to be one

spirit, and members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,—one with Christ, even as Christ is one with the Father.

I humbly trust that the ground-work for my next letter is deeply and solidly laid; and I hope that an interest is being excited in your mind, as to the views which are entertained of the teaching of the Prayer Book by converted Churchmen.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER III.

Regeneration Expounded.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hope and believe that you have thoughtfully weighed the distinction which I was enabled to lay before you in my last letter, between justification and regeneration, in which case, I think, you can hardly fail to be in possession of the key to the right understanding of the teaching of the Prayer Book, on the all-important subject of baptismal regeneration. But before we enter more fully upon it, perhaps it may be well to call your attention to the fact, that the Prayer Book was never intended for the use of the unconverted, or of persons who are not in the state of justification. The Church, in theory, does not include unbelievers or uncon-

verted sinners, even if they have been baptized; and backsliders who have fallen from grace ought also to be excluded from her ordinances, until they return to God. It is true that evil men in all ages have crept into the Church, as at the beginning, but they are not her acknowledged members. Article XIX. says, "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of *faithful men*, in which the pure word of God is preached; and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." The principle which was acted upon, on and after the day of Pentecost, is thus most clearly acknowledged as the Church's rule. You are, doubtless, aware that our translation of Acts ii. 47, is incorrect and very objectionable; it ought to be, "And the Lord added to the Church daily the saved, or those who were being saved." (*See Bengel's Gnomon, ad loc.*)

When an adult seeks for admission into the Church by Baptism, our Prayer Book demands that the greatest care should be taken, by special examination, to ascertain whether the candidate be duly prepared for the holy sacrament of initiation into the Christian Covenant. It tells us that before Christian Baptism, repentance, and faith are required, and these, you very well know, are the conditions of justification; as you also know, that

wherever there is true faith, it is imputed to its possessor for righteousness, and the blessings, powers, and benefits of justification are enjoyed. The Prayer Book directs, that the same caution shall be used before the baptized child shall be confirmed, and admitted to full Church privileges. As an evidence of the Church's jealous care with regard to this important matter, these two are the only instances in which the judgment of the minister, in the course of his pastoral duties, is not alone to be trusted. The rubric directs that in the case of the adult, timely notice, of a week at least, shall be given to the Bishop, who must either examine the candidate himself, or specially appoint a substitute for that purpose; and in the case of the candidate for confirmation, the minister or curate "must either bring or send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of such persons within his parish as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop; and *if the Bishop approve of them,*" which implies personal examination, "then he shall proceed to confirm them." The Prayer Book, you perceive, is not to blame for the admission of the world into the Church; and I must needs say, that if these, by far the most important rubrics in the Prayer Book, and yet the most neglected and sinned against, had been attended to as they ought to have been, the Church

would now, by God's blessing, have been filled with living souls, and would have rejoiced in a converted ministry; instead of being crushed under the elements of the world, and burdened with an amount of spiritual death which, to contemplate and to feel, is enough to paralyse the little measure of fresh zeal, which, through God's mercy, is still springing up within her.

Unhappily, to meet this abnormal state of things, which existed when the Prayer Book was compiled, (and that too, I suspect, to as great an extent as it does in our day,) no provision was made. And when God, in loving mercy, raised up evangelizing agencies, or rather men fitted in every way for evangelizing work, to meet the greatest of all necessities, their services were rejected, and they themselves were thrust out of the Church by the carnal mind which was then dominant within her. Still, the only recognition of an evangelizing agency, which could justly have claimed a place in the Book of Common Prayer, would have been an ordination service for such as are peculiarly qualified for this special kind of work. For there is no necessity that Evangelists should be either priests or deacons; although their being so would certainly be no disadvantage. Such an ordination service would have been the Church's recognition of this office and work, and it is very much wanted. It might also have amounted to an

acknowledgment of the truth that there is work for every member of the Church to do; and that evangelizing, in some form or other, is the duty and privilege of all who are alive to God. This would have constituted the Church's sanction for every kind of lay agency, and the sooner it is given the better.

There can be no appointed order for evangelizing work; it should always be done out of the Church, so to speak, and yet under the Church's direction; neither does it require any set forms of prayer. It is no part of the Evangelist's business to lead the devotions of God's people. His work is with unconverted sinners; and what have unconverted sinners to do with devotional services? The Evangelist must pour out his soul unto God on behalf of his hearers, and pray that He may touch their hearts, and help him by His Spirit to deal effectively with their consciences, that they may be awakened and converted to God. And the sinner's only response to such a prayer ought to be the heartfelt cry of an awakened soul for mercy and forgiveness. The prayer of the unconverted is a very short one, even, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; and his only inquiry ought to be, "What shall I do to be saved?" When he makes use either of a form of prayer, or indeed of any prayer save this one, he comes before God in a character

which does not belong to him; and is unconscious of, or forgets his one great and primary need, as a poor, lost, and perishing sinner,—the pardon of his sins and the salvation of his soul.

I have written much to shew the distinction between justification and regeneration; but, to make the assurance of being clearly understood doubly sure, I am adding a little more to explain the difference between the way of leading sinners to the realization of the saving power of justifying faith, and the proper work of the sacrament and covenant of regeneration; the one being the necessary preparation for admission into the Church, and the other being the proper work which is to be done by her ministry, and her living members in the Church.

The Book of Common Prayer, as you know, is a manual of devotion, containing services of public worship for such as are in the state of justification, and only for such; and therefore it is, that it makes no provision for evangelizing work, or for the awakening and conversion of sinners. It is true that, in certain parts of the services, the language is deeply self-abasing and penitential, resembling that which might be used by the unconverted sinner. Still, it is only a resemblance in the letter, and really differs as much from it, as the *penitence* of a believer, which is a fruit of the Spirit, differs

from the *repentance* of the awakened sinner before his justification. Indeed there is no language which ought to be more deeply penitential, self-abasing, and self-abhorrent, than that either of children who are conscious of innumerable and oft-repeated short-comings, of wilfulness, of wrong-doing, and above all of negligent ingratitude towards a holy, and a loving, and a most indulgent Father; or of blood-bought souls, who have evinced the same spirit and conduct, towards their adorable, self-sacrificing Redeemer. Still, the erring and straying, which we confess, is like that of lost sheep, and not of rebellious goats. The great and eternal difference between the sheep and the goats ought never to be lost sight of. And the confession concludes with the prayer, not that we may be converted, but "that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of God's holy name." And in the general absolution, it is said, that God hath given power and commandment to His ministers, to declare and pronounce, only "*to His people* being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." And it thus concludes, "Wherefore, let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to His eternal

joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Similarly although we commence the Litany in the deepest self-abasement, and plead for deliverance from all our besetments and spiritual enemies, we proceed to intercession for every order and for all conditions of men; and we all ought to know, that intercession is Christ-like work, and not befitting those who are not themselves reconciled to God. Now as is the Church and her services, so, in perfect accordance with both, is the sacrament of Baptism; for beyond all doubt it was ordained for the justified or true believers, and for them only. Throughout the Word of God this is ever God's order, as in the following passages,—"Repent and be baptized;" and "He that believeth and is baptized;" and "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized;" and "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" On the day of Pentecost, St. Peter said to the awakened thousands, "Repent, and be baptized." But faith was not dispensed with, for it immediately follows, "and with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then *they that gladly received his word* were baptized."

I begin to think that there are some defensible grounds for agreeing with Steir, (who is thoroughly

orthodox, according to the generally accepted teaching of our own Church, and is certainly one of the profoundest theologians of the day, from the circulation of whose works in this country more enlarged and deeper views of divine truth, it is to be hoped, are being extensively propagated,) that our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus refers primarily to justification, and not to Christian Baptism. "The Pharisees and lawyers had rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized with John's baptism." (Luke vii. 30.) Nicodemus himself addresses our Lord in the pharisaical—"We know," instead of the language of a penitent or humble learner. There is therefore a peculiar force in the supposition, that our Lord intended to rebuke the pharisaical "we know," and to convict Nicodemus of his sin in not having availed himself of John's baptism unto repentance, and in having thus neglected the appointed means of grace, when He said to him,—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can neither see nor enter into the kingdom of God." Hence that these words are simply parallel to the saying in Matt. xviii. 3, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, *ye shall not enter* into the kingdom of heaven." To be born again, was an expression in common use among the Jews. The baptism of

proselytes was called a new birth into the family of Abraham, (see Psalm lxxxvii. 4, 6.) And it was a Rabbinical proverb, that, "A penitent man must be like one new born to-day." Thus justification may very allowably be termed a birth of John's water baptism, that is, of repentance and of the Spirit; for justification actually and always implies repentance, and the restoration to spiritual life which was forfeited by the fall. It certainly tends to confirm this interpretation, that this birth of water and the Spirit is called by our Lord an earthly thing, a first principle, an act by which saving grace and sinful nature are brought together, a preparation for heavenly things. Christian Baptism, on the other hand, is a heavenly thing, one of the highest and deepest of Christian mysteries, which Nicodemus could not have been justly rebuked for not comprehending. To be regenerate, or *born of God*, which is the fruit of the Christian Covenant, into which we are initiated by Baptism, belongs to the *apostolical* development of Christian language, of which Nicodemus, and even our Lord's disciples, could know nothing. Besides, our Lord illustrates His meaning by the typical brazen serpent, which cured by being looked upon, and that too instantaneously; and of this cure justification is undoubtedly the true antitype. And last of all, the birth of water and of the Spirit, like

conversion in Matt. xviii. 3, already referred to, is represented as a prerequisite—a necessary qualification—for both seeing and entering the kingdom, which kingdom is doubtless that which our Saviour preached, and which Nicodemus came to inquire about—the Church on earth which is to be perfected in glory. Thus, this much debated passage may fairly be considered as an additional scriptural testimony to the truth, that justification is the necessary preparation for regeneration; although, by accepting this interpretation, I by no means exclude a more recondite reference to Christian Baptism. But, be this as it may, there is no room for questioning the general and unequivocal testimony of Scripture and the Prayer Book, that we must repent and believe before we are baptized.

I have yet one more observation to make, and then my preliminaries shall be concluded; and I make it because of a misconception, which has taken such full possession of the evangelical mind, that it will be no easy matter to dispossess it. Whenever the *New* Covenant is mentioned, Evangelicals imagine that the Covenant of Redemption is indicated, in contradistinction to the Covenant of works, which was originally made with Adam. Now, the Covenant of Redemption, by virtue of which grace and salvation from the wrath of God come to believers, and which is the ground of our justifi-

cation, is never called in Scripture a New Covenant. There are reasonable grounds for conceiving that in the councils of eternity a Covenant of Redemption was entered into between God the Father and His eternal Son, although there is scarcely to be found throughout Scripture any mention of such a covenant in express terms, excepting in Heb. xiii. 20, where it is called the everlasting Covenant. Such truly would be the proper designation of a covenant of this nature, for it has been effectively in force since the fall, and it will be in force as long as sinners continue to be born into the world. But we must not forget that this was a covenant entered into before the worlds were, and therefore it is the oldest covenant of all; neither must we forget that the covenanting parties were God and His eternal Son, and that we are simply the recipients of its benefits, whereas the New Covenant is between God and His people, and Christ is its Mediator. Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant of the law, only as a servant; but Christ, the Mediator of the New or Christian Covenant, is so, as a Son over His own house, which house is the Church. It is high time that these superficial misconceptions should be denounced and abandoned, for they have too long given countenance to the most perplexing and yet ridiculous misunderstandings. We can hardly read a page of the controversies between Churchmen and

Evangelicals without discovering that, when Churchmen are speaking of the New Christian Covenant of Regeneration, Evangelicals seem always to take it for granted that they mean the everlasting Covenant of Redemption, and thus they have been perpetually contending against antagonists of their own creating!

We are now, I trust, in a favourable position for entering, in a direct way, upon the subject of baptismal regeneration; and I may say at once, without the fear of being misunderstood, that the Prayer Book is constructed upon the belief, that Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the New or Christian Covenant, which, after our Lord's ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost, superseded the Old Covenant of the law. This Covenant is between God and His spiritual Israel; for all true believers or justified souls are the spiritual children of Abraham, to whom the promise of the New Covenant was made. Of this New Covenant, Christ, "as a Son over His own house," is the Mediator, just as Moses, as a servant, was a mediator in the house of the typical Israel. Christian Baptism, while it is a seal to our justification, which we had before we were baptized, insuring to us all the powers and blessings of the state of justification, (namely, the gift of the Spirit, and not only the forgiveness of sins, but the non-imputation of sin, throughout the continuation of our conflict with the world, the

flesh, and the devil,) at the same time symbolizes and indicates the drowning and burying of the old Adam in us, and the imparting of Christ to us, in the power of His resurrection life—a process which is to render us new creatures, or a new creation, after the nature and image of Christ the second Adam. And, that this regeneration or re-genesis may be effected, we are separated unto God, and set apart in the way of covenant obligation, to a life of self-denial, world-renouncement and flesh-crucifixion, even unto conformity to Christ's death—that is, not merely to the death of the impure and corrupt old man, for there was no old Adam in Him, but to the death of the creaturely will, which He had in common with ourselves, and which He overcame by obedience, even unto the death of the cross. This constant "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," has for its object then the destruction of the old Adam, and the complete subjection of the creaturely will, that the life of Christ may be imparted to us, in the same measure as the death unto self progresses, until it become so dominant in us, that we may be able to say with the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Thus the Baptismal Covenant, we may say in few words, has for its object the re-creation or regeneration of the redeemed, or justified spiritual

Israel, after the image and nature of Him that created them—that is, after the image of Christ, who is our Creator, in righteousness and true holiness; that we may be perfectly and eternally united to Christ, even as He is one with the Father. This is our high calling, and the glory of the Christian dispensation. This is the fulfilment of the promise, "A new covenant will I make with them after those days saith the Lord, *I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more; I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" (Heb. x. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16.)

The following allegory, which is necessarily imperfect, and very inapplicable in many of its bearings, may possibly render some little help towards the forming of a conception of the nature and object of the Baptismal Covenant. An emigrant ship is stranded on a sand bank at some distance from the shore, and the vessel is apparently in no immediate danger of going to pieces, and is plentifully supplied with all manner of luxuries and provisions. The king of the country and his son, with great labour, and at the risk of their lives, manage to convey a rope to the ship, and some of the emigrants eagerly lay hold of it and are safely brought to land; while others, anticipating no immediate

danger, refuse the proffered help, preferring to enjoy themselves in feasting upon the good things which they possess in such plenteous store; when unexpectedly the vessel breaks up, and all on board perish. The saved I need hardly say represent the justified—the spiritual Israel—those who believe to the saving of their souls. Now let us conceive that the king of the country should thus address them. "You owe your lives to me and to my son, and I do not suspect that you will be wanting in gratitude, for that would be a wickedness which would lead to the forfeiture of my favour, and bring down upon you deserved judgment. But I have a proposal to make to you, which will be greatly to your own advantage. Will you abandon your own country, and renounce all intention and wish of returning to it? Will you become my adopted children, and submit yourselves entirely to my will? An usurper holds possession of part of my dominions, will you fight under my banner, and regain my rightful inheritance? And will you enter my school, and submit to my discipline, that you may be qualified for reigning with me, and I will make you my heirs conjointly with my son, and I will select one from among you for his bride who shall be found the most worthy of so high a destiny and of so exalted an union?" Such is the long promised and now established Baptismal

Covenant under the mediatorship of Christ, into which God most condescendingly and lovingly enters with those who through grace have been justified by faith, and are the spiritual children of faithful Abraham. And the object of this Covenant is that the old Adam may be destroyed, and that the new man may be formed in them, who is none other than Christ the Lord; that He being their life, and they being bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, and Spirit of His spirit, may thus be qualified by perfect union with Him, for becoming "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Him in the kingdom of God the Father."

Let us now proceed to examine the scriptural authority for this profound and glorious teaching of the Prayer Book; and I must needs say, that if we are to bring forward all the passages which support it and bear upon it, we must begin with Genesis and end with the Revelation. But it is with regeneration, just as it is with Christian unity. We find that even converted men account unity a non-essential;—and why? Because they are neither conscious of the fact, that self-will is dominant in them, nor do they regard it in itself as an evil which opposes the will of God and prevents their union with Him. They do not discern God's purpose in constituting "the following after unity" a high Christian precept. Yet it remains the

truth, although they do not discern it, that Christian unity is a most wise and loving provision to counteract that supremacy of self, which places man above God as the judge and director of his conduct, and prevents that ineffable union with Him which is man's original destiny. Baptismal regeneration meets with precisely the same kind of treatment. Its want is not felt, and its nature and object are not understood. Now I say emphatically, but in the spirit of love, that as long as converted men regard conversion or justification and the sanctification of our sinful nature as the great work and the highest object and end of our probationary state, instead of that winning of Christ, which was the life-long labour of St. Paul,—that participation of the divine nature, for which so many exceeding great and precious promises are given,—that union with Christ which is the glorious prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,—that regeneration whereby we are made new men after the nature and image of Christ, so long will they continue to be blinded to the true meaning of all those portions of Scripture which directly treat of, or have reference to, those transcendent glories, which are the hope of our calling, and the promised reward of faithfulness to our covenant engagements. Every verse which they read will be brought down to their own standard, however difficult it may be to strain

and wrest it from its true interpretation to suit their previously-formed conceptions, and to make it dove-tail into their own peculiar system. Hence the appeal to Scripture has become the taunt and jeer of the Romanist and the infidel; and when the honest student has recourse to a commentary, he finds as many different expositions as the authorities he consults, and very generally all of them are equally unsatisfactory. The Scriptures are not to blame, for, after all, they are the only true and dependable rule of faith; but a little more light is very much wanted to understand them aright. When a man is converted to God, the Bible becomes a new book to him, and he sees conversion and the doctrines of grace everywhere throughout it, and wonders that he never saw them before. Still, he is but a babe in Christ, and the Bible is nothing more than a child's book to him; and blessed be God, he will never find any good reason for either denying or esteeming lightly the truths which it then taught him. But it is the sin and just reproach of converted men that they are so fully satisfied with their state of babyhood, that they always continue to be babes. Should it please God to awaken them to the danger of abiding in the *principles* of the doctrine of Christ, instead of leaving them as they are commanded to do, and to open their eyes to see the glory of the Christian

Covenant and the high calling wherewith they are called, the Bible will again become a new book to them. It will be no longer the book of the child, but the book of a young man in Christ, and every narrative, parable, and miracle, doctrine and precept, will teach them a higher lesson, and bring before them a deeper truth. When our eternity of being is realized, I mean when we inwardly grasp its awfully incomprehensible endlessness—when with our whole power of thought we lay hold of the truth that we can never cease to exist, even as God can never cease to exist, nothing less than the hope of being made partakers of the Divine nature, and becoming somehow incorporated with God, though without the loss of our own individuality, can sustain the soul under the pressure of the thought; for the thought of our eternity of existence is too large for the finite mind to bear, without being overwhelmed by an inexpressible consciousness, that eternity and the finite are unsuited to each other. Even common intelligence, without any such overpowering realization, may reach the conclusion, that eternal life, without such of its properties as would render it endurable, would be oppressive beyond endurance, instead of desirable and blessed. I by no means think disparagingly of that infantile or child-like simplicity which looks forward to heaven as a state of happiness, without

either desiring or attempting to comprehend our incomprehensible infinitude of existence; still, it is in the light of eternity that the true interpretation of the higher truths of revelation are most clearly discerned, that the nature of our glorious destiny is best understood, and that we strive most earnestly and long most fervently for its attainment.

On turning to the Word of God, let us take the second chapter in the Book, without forgetting that the first is full of typical teaching, on the subject of the regeneration. Here we find that man in his innocence was placed in a state of probation; and wherefore was he thus placed? Doubtless, that his creaturely will might be subjected to the will of God. For this reason he was exposed to temptation, and, under temptation, the will yielded and became self-will, in direct opposition to the will and commandment of God. It is not innocence, but perfected virtue, which subjects the human will to the will of God. If innocence had produced obedience, then the Divine nature would have been incorporated with the human nature, and Adam would have been permitted to eat of the tree of life—the type of Christ, not as a Saviour (for sinners must not approach the tree of life) but as the giver of eternal life; for He is that eternal life which was with the Father from the beginning. (1 John i. 2.) Thus, we are very plainly taught, that

it is not in accordance with the eternal and most loving purpose of God, that Christ should *only* die in our stead, and render a perfect obedience to the law for us, as Evangelicals suppose and assert, but that He should actually become our life; so that by the self-same power whereby He rose from the dead we also may be raised into newness of life; and may be thus rendered capable of subjecting our will to the will of God, which is the *essential prerequisite* to eternal union with him.

I consider that Adam's probation and ours have precisely the same object. He in his innocence needed no remedial economy, and therefore, in his case, the remedial economy and regeneration cannot be confounded. To us, a remedial economy is the first and great necessity; therefore, after we are justified, and not till then, our proper probationary work begins. There is just this difference between Adam as at first created, and ourselves—it is an all-important one, and altogether in our favour. He stood in his innocence, but we, as justified souls, stand in the blood of Christ, and have, by Covenant, sealed unto us, not merely the forgiveness of sins, but the non-imputation of sin. The fathers, but especially St. Augustine, and the mystics, tell us, that the man represents the understanding, and the woman the will, which has its root in the affections—(the θελημα and the *voluntas;*)

and that, as our blessed Lord was conceived in the woman by the Holy Ghost, so Christ is conceived by the Holy Spirit in the human will; that He grows in the womb of the human affections by the Holy Ghost; and that in due time He is born in us, although we are yet but a stable in which beasts have their dwelling; that the life and essence of the God-man gradually permeates our whole being, as the old man is destroyed; and thus we are changed into the same image, from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; until we attain unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. I suppose neither of us want to have very much to do with mysticism, but you will perceive, by this sketch, that the doctrine of regeneration, as it is exhibited in the Prayer Book, and as I conceive it is taught in the second chapter of Genesis, has been held and taught by the brightest luminaries of the Church.

The second passage of Scripture to which I am going to refer, is so direct in its teaching, that there is no honest way of escaping from it. In the case of Noah, whose deliverance by the flood is declared by an inspired Apostle to prefigure a salvation by baptism, we have in the foreground a man already quickened, justified, and possessing spiritual life—a righteous man, and a preacher of righteousness,—a man who was saved because he

was a righteous man, and not because he was a sinner. This, you will observe at once, excludes justification by entirely reversing its order; for we need to be justified because we are ungodly sinners, and not because we are righteous. The sacred record reads thus:—"The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Here we have it again, as it is in every part of the Word of God, first justification, and then regeneration. But what was Noah saved from, and by what means was he saved? It would be a very natural reply to say that he was saved from destruction, and that he was saved by the ark. Had this been what St. Peter meant to teach us, there would have been no reference to Baptism, and the popular interpretation would have been perfectly correct. In fact we should simply have had justification figuratively exemplified; the old world would have represented the state of condemnation, and the ark would have prefigured Christ; and this is just the light in which the type is generally viewed by Evangelicals; and it may be quite allowable by way of accommodation, thus to view it in our addresses to sinners. But the difficult question arises, How does Baptism save us? and this is a question which Evangelicals will never be able to answer, even to their own satisfaction.

When we look below the surface, we see very clearly that it was not from destruction that Noah was saved. He was never in any danger of being destroyed by the flood, for we know that God does not destroy the righteous with the wicked. It was not with Noah as with Lot, "Escape for thy life, lest thou be consumed." The ark was prepared beforehand and ready for his reception, therefore he was safe from all peril of an external nature. The Apostle evidently means to teach us that Noah was saved from a world overwhelmed in wickedness, which was indeed a great salvation, and placed in a new world of covenant blessedness. The type would not have prefigured Baptism if it had been said that it was the ark that saved him; we are therefore expressly told, that he was saved *by water;* and we are also told that like as Christ was raised out of the grave, so Noah was raised out of a drowned world, and borne by the water to a new and purified world. The change is not from death unto life, as in the case of justification; but from an old corrupted nature, to our original nature purified and animated by a new life; which new life is Christ Himself in His resurrection power: and therefore, the fruit is not that of an imputed righteousness, (by virtue of which even our feeblest and most imperfect services, mixed in motive and having more of flesh than Spirit in their perform-

ance, are yet acceptable to God through Christ,) but of a righteousness wrought in us by the resurrection power and indwelling of Christ, which alone can give "the answer of a good conscience toward God." This is the true regeneration. It is the *water*, and the *resurrection power* to which the salvation of Noah are specially attributed, which gives distinctness to the type, and which explains to us the particular point in Baptism to which St. Peter refers. I by no means deny that there is a washing by Baptism as well as a drowning of the old man, and the rising unto newness of life by the power of Christ's resurrection; but we have nothing to do with the washing here. It is neither a salvation from the penalty of sin, nor a cleansing from the filth of sin, that is indicated. The Apostle plainly tells us so, and the type itself teaches us the same thing, for, as I have already said, Noah was saved by grace, washed in atoning and cleansing blood, and accepted of God, before he ever entered the ark or was saved by water. I know that Evangelicals allege that the putting away of the filth of the flesh refers to the outward washing, or the mere formal act of Baptism, in contradistinction to the inward grace, but this is altogether foreign to the type, and is but a poor way of trying to get out of one difficulty by running into another; for I am sure they do not believe that we are either

justified or saved by Baptism; and it would therefore be better that they should seek to be directed to a safer solution.

Without going further, at present, into the "*drowning,*" or the "*burying,*" and "the *planting in the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection by baptism,*" which is by far the most important part of the Baptismal Covenant, and which is treated of so largely in St. Paul's Epistles, let us proceed to the consideration of the Covenant of Circumcision, which was superseded by the Covenant of Baptism, and to which it is strictly analogous. And the first thing we meet with is the fact, that Abraham was justified, and was the friend of God, before he was circumcised. Here again we have justification before regeneration. Abraham's life, from his call unto his death, is an exemplification of the spirit of faith; but it was not until he was ninety and nine years old that the Covenant of Circumcision was instituted. It could not therefore, in any sense, have justification or salvation for its object. Let me again repeat, what I have already so often repeated, that salvation ever was, and ever will be, the fruit of the eternal Covenant of Redemption entered into by God and His Eternal Son before the worlds were. It is true, that the promise was given to Abraham that Christ should be of his seed, and this was the greatest of

all honours; but Christ had been promised long before Abraham's time, even to Adam immediately after the fall. Hence the promise of Christ—the Lamb which was slain before the foundation of the world, by the atoning efficacy of whose blood righteous Abel was saved, even as we are saved, and the promise that Christ should be of the seed of Abraham, must not be confounded. Thus, we clearly see that the Covenant of Circumcision presupposed the acceptance of the benefits of the eternal Covenant of Redemption; for God cannot, as I have before observed, enter into covenant with those who are not reconciled to Him; and there is none other appointed way of reconciliation than through faith in the atoning blood of the Everlasting Covenant. What then was the object of the Covenant of Circumcision? It was a covenant of *separation unto God,* first of one man, then of a family, and then of a nation, from among all the nations of the earth, *for the accomplishment of God's own purposes;* and because of the Covenant, special benefits and privileges were promised to the covenanted people. These purposes of God were not mentioned in detail, nor even alluded to, when the Covenant was made; but we find them all recorded in their course of development in the inspired history of the chosen nation. To the Jews were committed the oracles of God; they were His witnesses; and

the great preparatory work for the advent of Christ and for the establishment of a better Covenant with better promises was wrought out by and through their instrumentality.

We must not pass over the solemnities which were observed, nor the promises which were given when the first Covenant was made; for all of them have their typical meaning for our information; and the spiritually enlightened can see very much which concerns them, in the few verses in which the establishment of the Covenant, which is analogous to our own Baptismal Covenant, is narrated and described. First, there was the special revelation of God to Abraham as a God almighty and all-sufficient, which amounted to the assurance of never-failing and adequate assistance for every work and duty, under all circumstances and in every emergency. We also who are baptized into Christ have not only the promise of Christ's resurrection power, but we are actually planted in the likeness of His death, that we may be sharers of His resurrection life. Again, there was the new name which was given to Abraham, formed by the addition of a letter taken from the great name Jehovah; and we also have our new name, given unto us when we are baptized; and the title "Christian" implies that we are the disciples and brethren of Christ. Then, there is the promise

of fruitfulness, and of an everlasting inher... And then, again, we have the blood-shedding ... the old man and the indelible sign of the Covenant, which symbolized entire separation of the whole man unto God, and brought God's covenanted people, under covenant obligation, to carry out that cutting around, or "circumcision of the heart and in the Spirit, whose praise is not of men but of God."

The Covenant of Circumcision furnishes ample subject matter for a volume; but I have said enough upon it for my present purpose: and shall therefore proceed, by God's help, to establish the fact, which I have all along been taking for granted and trying to illustrate, that there is A CHRISTIAN COVENANT. I observed in the last paragraph, that when the Covenant of Circumcision was made and entered into, there was nothing said about the purposes of God in establishing it; that these came out in their course of development in the inspired history of the chosen nation; and we find precisely the same order in the case of the Baptismal or Christian Covenant. Christ establishes the Covenant, and His whole life, all that He said and did, save only His atoning work, constitute the Law of the Covenant; but it was left to the Apostles, after they had received the Spirit, to explain its nature and object. It is however worthy of remark, in

ng, that there is a striking similarity between e words of God to Abraham, when He gave him the Covenant of Circumcision,—"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect:" and those addressed by Christ to His disciples, when He instituted the Baptismal Covenant,—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The change of Abram's name too into Abraham, as I have before hinted, is evidently typical of our being baptized into Christ, in the name of the Adorable Trinity, which is certainly a formal adoption into sonship, although the Spirit of adoption may not be then imparted; for there is a great difference between what is done formally, when a covenant is entered into, and what is received actually, when the conditions of the covenant are complied with and fulfilled. With regard to the omission of the words,—*and is not baptized*,—(Mark xvi. 16,) in that solemn declaration, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," I shall venture to give my own views, as many others have given theirs. It is my conviction, that the omission was intended to teach us, that our salvation depends upon our

faith, or on believing, and consequently they who do not "believe to the saving of their souls," must be damned. It also seems to teach us that salvation is sealed and assured to the believer by Baptism, to this end, that in the spirit of that holy liberty, wherewith Christ has made him free, he may enter upon his proper covenant work, and by God's help perform his covenant engagements, without being beset and harassed, as many believers are, with those slavish doubts and fears which arise from an unconscious legality, and "gender to bondage." From this observation may be gathered the proper answer to the question—Wherein serveth Baptism in respect to justification? For doubtless we are not only "baptized by one Spirit into one body," but, if we be in a prepared state, we are also sealed by the self-same Spirit, unto the day of redemption." Thus the baptismal waters follow us, as the Rock followed the Israelites in the wilderness. In other words, the living members of the body of Christ "are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel;" for although the one sacrifice was once offered for all, and when justified we are justified from all things, yet we continually stand in need of its atoning and cleansing efficacy.

You perceive that I continually make a point of

distinguishing between justification and regeneration, and I do so, because I know that all our differences, if not primarily occasioned, are at least perpetuated by their being confounded and mistaken for each other. There can be no real advance towards the restoration of unity, and no end to controversy, until the distinction is clearly understood by all parties between *our being in Christ* for justification, and *Christ being in us* for regeneration,—between *what Christ has done for us*, to procure our salvation, which is purely remedial, and *the formation of Christ in us*, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is the essential prerequisite to our being perfectly and eternally united with Christ, as Christ is one with the Father. This is the glorious destiny for which we were originally created, and the transcendant prize of our high calling. And therefore it is my fervent prayer that God may enable you to see the truth very clearly which I am going, by His help, to place before you. Far be it from me to give the smallest sanction to the disuniting of what God has joined together, as if their union was immaterial or a matter of choice; for under the existing dispensation, justification and regeneration ought always to go together. It is always—Believe and be baptized; and I should be less of a true catholic, (that is, one who receives and believes all truth,) than I

desire to be, if they were not united in my own mind, in my heart, and I trust in some small measure in my experience; but the truth is, and it must be told, by our divisions we have divided Christ, as far as it is in our power to do so, and blinded our minds to the true meaning of those portions of His Word, which go above and beyond the restrictive lines of our own several systems. It is a truth far too notorious to be gainsaid, that our being in Christ for justification is but little known in the Church, and Christ in us for regeneration is not known at all in the Chapel; you will therefore, I am sure, bear with me, if, in my eagerness to see Church and Chapel co-operating for the glory of God and the good of souls, I am continually bringing before you the real obstacle to their reunion.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER IV.

Regeneration Expounded in the Light of Christ and the Word.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU will doubtless have observed that although we are baptized in the name of the Adorable Trinity, St. Paul repeatedly and very emphatically tells us that we are baptized *into Christ*, and that

we are planted by Baptism in the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection. Now, Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the New or Christian Covenant, just as the act of circumcising was the rite of initiation into the Covenant of Circumcision. If, then we are baptized into Christ, it is evident that CHRIST IS OUR NEW COVENANT.

Let us turn for a moment to that wonderful chapter—the forty-second of Isaiah, where the glory of the Christian dispensation is foretold, and we shall get some clear light upon the subject.

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law. Thus saith the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, AND GIVE THEE FOR

A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE, for a light of the Gentiles; to open their eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?" In the forty-ninth chapter there is a closely parallel passage in a prophecy respecting the restoration of Israel, and their participation in the glory of the Christian covenant. "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee; and in a day of salvation have I helped thee. I will preserve thee, AND GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of waters shall He guide them: and I will make my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted." The great promise, *I will give thee for a*

covenant of the people, in the first prophecy I have quoted, St. Matthew tells us is fulfilled in Christ. (Matt. xii. 18.) And the same great promise in the second quotation, which might seem specially to refer to the Jews, St. Paul in his second Epistle to the Corinthians consigns directly to the Christian Covenant, and most strikingly connects the prophecy with the Covenant, by applying to those who do not receive the grace of God in vain, the promise of God, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people:" and "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 2, 16.) The prophet says, "Who will hearken and hear, for the time to come?" plainly indicating that until the Incarnation, when St. Matthew tells us, the prophecy was fulfilled, *Christ as the New Covenant* was only promised amongst the better things to come. He was not the Covenant of the Old Testament saints, yet He was their Saviour as well as ours. As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, "salvation belonged unto Him," and He dispensed it unto them as it pleased Him. But Christ was not to them *the antitype of the Tree of Life.* They were not baptized into Christ. They had not the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world; for Christ tells us plainly, that

Moses had not that bread to give. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," saith Christ, "hath eternal life; for he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and *I in him.*" The eternal Son of God was not actually but only prospectively Christ, until He became man, for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one *Christ.*" Although therefore our blessed Lord was the Saviour of the Old Testament saints, by virtue of the everlasting covenant entered into between God and His eternal Son, Christ was not their life, as He is our life. It is the glory of the New Covenant, that to impart Christ to us, as our life, is its very purpose and highest object. When we are baptized into Christ, we are planted in the likeness of His death. What death? Surely not His sacrificial death, but unto the death of the creaturely life or will, which, though without sin, He had, as man, in common with us, and which was perfectly accomplished by His obedience even unto the death of the cross. Thus we too engage, when we are baptized, to become, by His help, conformable unto His death; and we are also planted in the likeness of His resurrection, that by the power of His resurrection we may rise into newness of life. So that both in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in the sacrament of Baptism, the attainment or reception

of eternal life, or *the life of Christ*, is the high and glorious object for which the two sacraments were chiefly instituted. Unquestionably there were other purposes, which their institution was intended to subserve; but it is equally certain, and their very external symbolism proves the fact, that the burying of the old Adam, and the creation of the new man after the image of Christ, yea, and in the very nature of Christ, in righteousness and *true* holiness, is their highest purpose. Blessed be God, "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly;" and "as Christ is, so are we in this world;" and, "when Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, we shall be like Him, and we shall appear with Him in glory."

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. But where was the meeting place? There is no other place where a righteous God, and a guilty sinner can meet, but on ground that has been sprinkled with blood. God has said,—"the soul that sinneth it shall die,"—and it was a righteous law. Infinite mercy pleaded for the sinner, and God's eternal Son took our nature upon Him, became the sinner's substitute, and paid the penalty of the broken law. Even in this sense Christ is our covenant of peace. God accepts of us in Christ, and we come to Him by Christ. God offers Christ to us as His propitiation, and we offer Christ to Him as our propitia-

tion. And although God and His eternal Son were the covenanting parties, before the worlds were, yet, Christ is the covenant of *at-one-ment*, between God and the believer; and He thus becomes not only the source and procuring cause of our blessing, but it is by Him that they are secured unto us. His wounds are the graving which at once satisfies the demands of offended justice, and which proclaims the remission of sins to us. But Christ is our Covenant in a very much higher sense. We are not only to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son, but we are to have the life of Christ communicated to us instead of our old, creaturely, selfish, life, and thus become partakers of the Divine nature, that we may be united to God. We must not place our high destiny, and our preparation and qualification for it, lower than Christ has placed it. Let us hear His own words, and they are not incomprehensible to those who know Him, and who also know the original purpose of their own being: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I IN THEM, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. And I

have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I IN THEM." The last petition, you perceive, in this amazing prayer is a repetition; and what is it? It is even for the greatest of all glorious realities, the glory of the Christian dispensation, that CHRIST MAY BE IN US, which is our hope of glory." Now unless we are made righteous by becoming "partakers of Christ," as well as by being accounted righteous, when we are not so, for Christ's sake, we can never be united to a righteous God. It was not merely foretold, by the prophet Isaiah, that Christ should be given to us for a Covenant, but it was also foretold what God would do in us, by virtue of this Covenant. "Thus saith the Lord, This is the covenant I will make with them: After those days, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they all shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.) St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews quotes this passage twice over, and tells us that this long predicted covenant is none other than the Christian Covenant; and I may add, that all who are real-

izing its benefits, that is, all within whom Christ is really being formed, have no need that any one should teach them, for, as St. John saith, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" and he further adds, "but the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things."

We have now the New Covenant clearly before us, and some of its blessings have been already enumerated; but as a covenant is an agreement between two or more parties, the question still remains to be more fully answered, How is Christ our Covenant? With God a covenant is a gift as well as an agreement; a gift of which we receive the benefits, as we are obedient to its conditions. It is said, God gave unto Abraham and his seed the typical Covenant of Circumcision, and doubtless there was some measure of blessing vouchsafed to obedience, when the painful initiatory rite was performed; and doubtless, also, there were correspondingly higher blessings, for every stage of spiritual advancement towards the entire circumcision of the heart, unto which the outward rite bound them by way of covenant obligation. And in like manner when God gave to the Israelites the Covenant of the Law, of which Moses was appointed the mediator, he also gave special promises

of blessing to all who would be obedient to its demands. And when God gave us Christ for our Covenant, the great and glorious antitype of these two covenants, He gave us also the law of the Covenant, that is, the example and teaching of Christ; and promised the greatest of all rewards to those who should be obedient to it. Now we all know that we are not saved by obedience to Christ's teaching, or by following His example. We are saved by faith, and it is ever, he that believeth that is saved; so that we have nothing to do here with salvation from the penalty of sin. Christ as our Covenant is a covenant of promise, in every respect; not only long promised, but full of promises. St. Paul tells us, that Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises; even the promise of eternal inheritance, and eternal union with God; and therefore it is not, Obey the law of the Covenant, or in other words, Follow Christ, and thou shalt be saved; but Follow Christ, and thou shalt obtain "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" and that is, joint-heirship of God with Christ, and eternal union with God through Christ. It is a working *from life, and not for life;* and consequently all legality is excluded, which wherever it exists may be justly branded as a contravention of the great gospel truth, that "by grace are we saved through faith."

The Gospels—in which the life and teaching f Christ are recorded, and the Epistles—which are the Holy Spirit's commentary upon them, form the Book of the New Covenant or Testament. There is very little in them, especially in the Gospels, which is applicable to unconverted sinners; and what little there is, admits, for the most part, of a higher and deeper interpretation, or even demands it, in order to vindicate the word of God from the irreverent charge of being hyperbolical, which, I lament to say, is often and unscrupulously brought against it. As its name implies, the New Testament is emphatically the Book of the New Covenant, and although it often refers to first principles, as I am compelled to do in writing upon the higher subject of the regeneration, it presupposes that the eyes of those who come to its perusal have already been opened; otherwise, the understanding of the Scriptures aright is an impossibility, although it is quite true that the Holy Spirit may, and frequently does, make use of its words to the awakening of the sinner. It is actually an argument against the doctrine of justification by faith, brought forward by one, who made no small stir in the commencement of the Tractarian movement, that such a sentence as, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," or any one bearing precisely the same meaning, is not to be

found in the Gospels. Similarly he urges that the bodily diseases cured by our Lord, which answer to spiritual diseases now, were not death; and that a pre-existent faith was required by Him before He performed His miracles. Now, although I utterly repudiate the teaching which it is attempted to base on these considerations, yet there is no denying the fact, that the Gospels, which are specially, though not exclusively, the Book of the Covenant, belong to believers and not to unbelievers. There would be no use in telling an unbeliever to deny himself, and to take up his cross, and follow Christ. It would be positive misdirection. But what are the conditions of the New Covenant? How read we? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny HIMSELF, and take up his cross, and follow Me; for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall *lose his life* for my sake, shall find it." (Matt. xvi. 24.) "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and *his own life also*, he cannot be my disciple; for whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be my disciple; and whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xix. 26.) Those who are living in the light of the New Covenant have no difficulty in accepting these declara-

tions in the fulness of their meaning, because they perceive that they strike the death-blow to the creaturely life, for which it is the very object of the Covenant to substitute the life of Christ. But they who have not this light are forced to tell us, that Christ does not mean what He says, because such conditions could not be complied with, without doing violence to other Christian precepts, and therefore they say, that they cannot mean this, and they cannot mean that, and that our Lord is merely employing the language of the East, which is highly hyperbolical!

I am not blaming those who unhappily are the victims of defective and erroneous teaching, but I desire, in the love of the truth, and in love to their souls, to place before them, as clearly as I can, and therefore sometimes by way of contrast, the glorious prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and the appointed means by which it is to be obtained. Those who are living in the light of the New Covenant, have no need to be taught by me; and those who are not, if they be spiritually enlightened at all, will have little difficulty in discerning that Christ is the perfect pattern of the regenerate life. As I have already said, He had a creaturely will as well as ourselves, although sin never found an entrance into His creaturely life, and we have here and there indications throughout

His history, of the discipline He underwent in the great work of self-conquest, while His creaturely will was being subjected and brought into perfect oneness with the will of the Father. For instance, it is thus written concerning Him: "When He cometh into the world, He saith, Lo! I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." When He was yet a babe, He was carried down into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." When as a child He dwelt at Nazareth, we have this record of Him, "And the child grew, *and waxed strong in spirit*, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him;" and when He was twelve years old, after sitting in the temple in the midst of the doctors, He returned with His parents to Nazareth, "*and was subject unto them*," until He "began to be about thirty years of age;" and during this long period, we are informed, that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and *in favour with God* and man. He was tempted by the devil in the wilderness to exercise His creaturely will; for all that is in the world, which gratifies the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, was brought before Him. We are told that He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet with-

out sin; and that He Himself having suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted. How often does He tell us that He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him? And when the hour of His crucifixion drew near, He saith, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished;" and again, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." And lastly, whatever else was the cause of His agony in the garden, there was evidently a final struggle with His creaturely will, and a final conquest over it. His words are too emphatic to leave room for any doubt as to their meaning; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." And He fell on the ground and prayed, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him; and said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." Three times is the prayer repeated, while His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The last cry hath most of conquest in it; "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, THY WILL BE DONE." In connexion with this history of discipline, subjection to the will of God, and self-conquest, let us read two or three verses

out of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, (nature), for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." "Though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Here, you perceive, the salvation alluded to, is that final destruction of indwelling-sin, which is elsewhere called "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory;" and which we are exhorted to work out with fear and trembling, for that it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure; and therefore He is not said to be the Author of it, "unto them that believe in Him," but "*unto them that obey Him;*" for *obedience is the condition of the New Covenant glory.*

Now, if the conflict were so great in bringing the human will into perfect unity with the Divine, where there was spotless purity; what must it be in the justified in whom there is still indwelling sin? O that inconceivably awful but glorious truth! We must continue to exist whether we will or not as eternally as God Himself! Eternal

glory to which we are called, is inconceivable glory; and what must be the preparation and the transformation which the sinful and the finite must undergo, before they can be made like unto Christ, and see Him as He is! Here, as everywhere, the difference is brought before us, between being saved from wrath, or the penalty of sin, for the justified are so, and being transformed into the image of Christ; between believers and saints; between those who come to Christ to be healed of their diseases, and those who have renounced all to follow Him; and who count everything but dung and dross that they may win Him, and know the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship in His sufferings; and be made conformable unto His death, that they may attain unto His resurrection-life. Imputed righteousness is not the righteousness of the saints, but the righteousness of Christ imputed to us while sin is still dwelling within us; but the King's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing is of wrought gold—the true Bridal garment, which must be woven on earth, else it cannot be worn in heaven. Obedience to the Christian precepts contained in the Book of the Covenant, is not, as I have said before, to save us, but to make us all glorious within; and the first necessary step in the process, is the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts, the over-

coming of the world, the dying unto self—in short, we must put off the old man, before we can put on the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is the very spirit of the Law of the Covenant which pervades the whole Book, that as we die unto self, so shall we live unto God. All the precepts which it contains, that are purely Christian, are self-sacrificing, and enforce the renouncement of the world, the mortification of the flesh, and the withholding from self all that it craves, delights in, and feeds upon. Therefore it is, that the followers of Christ are called upon to leave all, to hate father and mother, and to lose their selfish creaturely life; for Christ Himself is the New Covenant which God has given to us, and He is the giver of eternal life, which is none other than His own, to all who obey Him. "Hereunto," saith St. Peter, "are we called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps;" and then he gives us this exhortation, "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." On this subject, as on every other, there is a perfect agreement in the teaching of the two great Apostles; St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians saith, "Let *this mind be in you* which was also in Christ Jesus;

who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." To his Hebrew converts he says, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin;" and he thus exhorts Timothy, his beloved son in the Gospel, "But thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life; *whereunto thou art also called*, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." For "it is a faithful saying, If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us." Again, in describing the successive privileges and prerogatives of the Christian, in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, we have these striking words, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; *if so be that we suffer with Him, that we also may be glorified together.*" But why should I multiply quotations?

Our calling unto the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, that we may be dead with Him to the creaturely life; and that by the power of His resurrection, we may be raised together with Him into newness of life, and sit with Him in heavenly places; and that we finally may be glorified together, is actually the key to the right understanding of the Book of the Covenant. If, however, we have not "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him," and if "the eyes of our understanding be not enlightened to discern what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead," how shall we know what we have to do to obtain eternal life, or how we are to strive, and run, and fight, and wrestle, that we may reach the mark and win "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"?

Hitherto, we have considered Christianity chiefly in its negative aspect, but the negative and the positive always go together; and though the relation between these is not that of cause and effect, yet as we deny self, so do we get Christ; as we are emptied, so are we filled; as we die to self, so

do we through Christ's indwelling live to God. In all the humiliations of Christ there is ever the manifestation of a moral glory truly Divine. His life was one continual discipline, from the cradle to the cross, but it was also one continual exhibition of the height and the depth of the love that never faileth. The contradiction of sinners against Himself which He endured, tended only to exemplify His long-suffering patience; "when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not;" "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." He loved His bitterest enemies; He blessed them that cursed Him; He did good to them that hated Him; He prayed for them who despitefully used Him and persecuted Him. All that He commands us to do, He did; all that He calleth upon us to be, He was; He is Himself in all things, and in all respects, that very Pattern, after which He is re-creating us, in righteousness and true holiness; and this is the true regeneration. The first work of creation occupied seven days, but then there was no moral evil to be expelled, no works of the devil to be destroyed. In the re-creation, everything is different, because of the preparations which are to be made, and of the hindrances which are to be

removed; but the progressive stages of the work are clearly revealed to us, and therefore our part in it need not be mistaken.

In the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, we have the fundamental laws of the Covenant, in the form of fundamental promises and beatitudes. They give us a clear conception of the order of Christianity; for we have here, as everywhere, the descending after the manner of Christ, before the ascending; for we ascend just as we descend, in unvarying proportion, and never otherwise. The descending and ascending scale is very beautifully presented to us by Lange, whose Theological and Homiletical Commentary is doing good work, in the way of infusing a little fresh Gospel truth into the shallow and threadbare conceptions of the Evangelical school. I shall give it nearly in his own words, merely premising, that the blessedness of the kingdom of Christ is accounted by the world unhappiness, and therefore, to the carnal mind, the beatitudes will ever appear to be so many paradoxes. We have nothing here, you perceive, about justification by faith, because the realization of its saving power is presupposed. The Sermon on the Mount is in fact our Lord's third discourse. His first is, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and it is very probable, as some have supposed, that the

Baptism by our Lord's disciples, previous to the day of Pentecost, was merely a Baptism unto repentance, like that of John the Baptist, in preparation for the kingdom which they were to announce, as being near at hand; for repentance is the necessary preparation for the Gospel. His second sermon was preached in the synagogue of Nazareth, and His text was taken from Isaiah lxi.: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Here we have justification from a true justification text; and this message in our dealing with unconverted sinners, ought always to succeed to the cry, "Repent ye," if souls are actually to be saved. But in the Sermon on the Mount we have no trace of this preparatory work. We have Christianity itself. In the introduction its fundamental principles are laid down; and then, in the first section, it is exhibited by way of contrast to Jewish traditionalism; in the second, it is contrasted with Gentileism, or the taking thought for the things of this life; and in the third, we are cautioned alike against a censorious spirit, fanaticism, and

antinomianism, that we may know how to avoid the false, and to choose the right and the true. By keeping these divisions in view, we get a clear conception of the bearings and subject-matter of this glorious discourse, which is utterly perverted and degraded when applied to the case of sinners previous to their conversion. To this the last section alone, in which a false religionism is guarded against, is an exception. Poverty of spirit comes first, as it is the first of Christian virtues, and the root or foundation of all the rest. It is not external poverty, or poverty of intellect, but poverty of spirit; hence the cardinal adage of the spiritualists, that we begin to be followers of Christ, when we know and feel that we are worse and less than nothingness, and that God is all; and then, and only then, we begin to find our all in Christ. But here is our promised extract from Lange's very thoughtful and valuable exposition:

"It were a great mistake to place the seven beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount in the same category with the ten commandments of the law. This were not to enrich, but to make them all the poorer. Their fulness consists in this, that each of these beatitudes comprises all the ten commandments, only from a higher and more comprehensive point of view, as summed up in the law of the Spirit. Even the first quality of poverty in

spirit comprises Mount Sinai, with all its commandments, inasmuch as this state of feeling is the aim, the object, the spiritual effect, and the subject and the substance of the entire legislation; and hence, also, the germ of the whole new life. It is impossible to feel poor in spirit, without at the same time longing for the riches of the Spirit of Christ, or of the kingdom of Heaven. Hence we draw the following inferences as to the succession of the beatitudes: 1. Each new stage contains again the first stage in a new form. 2. Each stage removes, and yet preserves, all the former stages. 3. In the last they are summed up and presented under the form of life which has attained its perfection. For, first, it is evident that the seven beatitudes are in reality only one beatitude. Secondly, the seven graces or spiritual states constitute one grand direction in reference to God and to our neighbour, even the direction of the heart unto truth. Lastly, the seven promises are not seven distinct elements, but seven successive forms under which the kingdom of heaven is presented. Under the first form, the kingdom of heaven itself is presented, but mainly objectively; while in the last form it reappears, but this time mainly subjectively, as finally possessed by the saints. The following contrasts exhibit the relation between the

apparent descent, and the *actual ascent* of souls, as presented in the seven beatitudes :—

"1. To be poor in spirit, and	To possess the kingdom of heaven, as the object set before us, or as possession of the heart.
2. To mourn without measure,	To be comforted without measure.
3. Meekly to bear injustice upon earth,	To obtain the dominion of the earth by spiritual triumphs.
4. To hunger and thirst in spirit after righteousness, (to bear the judgment of God,)	To be satisfied in the highest sense, and absolutely to obtain spiritual food and drink.
5. In the service of mercy to devote our life to the wants of the world,	To rest in the bosom of Infinite Mercy.
6. Purity of heart: absolute renunciation of the world, death of our own will,	To behold God. Absolute possession of all this vision of God. Blessed enjoyment of this vision.

7. To be peacemakers. To be sent and cast into every burning controversy of the world. To descend as mediators to the very gates of hell.	The glory and beauty of the sons of God, or of those who are princes in His eternal kingdom. The vehicles of the blessing which cometh from God. Transformed into the image of the Son of God.
Generally:	
To suffer for righteousness' sake,	Actual inward possession of the kingdom of Heaven.
To suffer for Christ's sake,	A new world: the eternal inheritance, the great reward in Heaven.

"The paradox exhibited in these contrasting statements, which probably comes out most distinctly in the first beatitude, indicates the relationship between Christianity and the world, and the judgment of the world generally. Christianity itself is that 'foolishness of God' which is wiser than the wisdom of the world, and that truth of God which sweeps away the delusive appearances of the world.

"It is evident that the seven stages here described

may be arranged under twice three stages, based upon poverty in spirit, and indicating a threefold relationship towards God and towards the world: 1. Religious and moral relationship to God: mourning, hungering, and thirsting; purity of heart. 2. Moral and religious relationship towards the world: meekness, mercy, peacemaking. Poverty of spirit being the root of all. But, besides, it is important to notice how each of these stages is always the result of that which precedes it. Thus poverty of spirit leads to mourning; mourning renders meek; meekness obtains a view of eternal righteousness; hungering and thirsting after this righteousness renders infinitely merciful and compassionate; mercy surrenders everything, renounces all, and thus becomes purity of heart, which surrenders all and devotes all. Purity of heart is the disposition requisite for the Divine commission of bringing peace into the world. The peacemakers necessarily suffer for righteousness' sake; and in a measure as they apprehend the kingdom of love in its essential features, will they see and understand that all is but suffering for Christ's sake."

I have given this long, and to me, most interesting extract with great thankfulness; for it rejoices my heart to find that men of the Evangelical school are receiving truth that will raise them out of a spurious Abrahamic piety, which has a great deal

more of the world than Christ in it; and that they are beginning to see that conversion does not make us Christians, but is only a necessary preparation for Christianity. It is a hopeful sign of deeper thoughtfulness and increasing light when such works as those of Lange and Steir are published by, and are circulating among, our Evangelical brethren; and they can hardly fail to do good service in the best direction by paving the way for the reception of deeper truth and for the restoration of Christian unity.

Lange tells us further, and tells us truly, that the progress from poverty of spirit to the highest stage of peacemaking and suffering for Christ's sake, is the effect of Divine grace acting upon and influencing the soul, which is humbled under a sense of spiritual poverty; but Divine grace has various ways and kinds of operation, and he gives us no definite information as to what is to be done, or how we are to make use of Divine grace, and co-operate with the Spirit of God. Now Christ, as our New Covenant, is the true light which makes all things clear to the spiritually enlightened mind; and although there may be a little repetition, it is best that we should have the Covenant before us in its proper order.

When our Lord appointed Baptism to be the sacrament of initiation into the New Covenant,

He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Here we have the necessary instruction preparatory to Baptism. Then, there is the performance of the rite: "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And lastly, we have the education of the baptized: "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And then we have the promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Now all that Christ commanded doubtless comprises the whole of Christianity, or, to express the same idea in apostolical language, it is our work, while in our state of probation, *to learn and to follow Christ.* This we shall find is fully and beautifully symbolized by the sacramental rite whereby we are initiated into the Christian Covenant, which has for its high object our regeneration after the nature and image of Christ. For, when our Lord adopted the ordinance of Baptism by water, which had been in use under the law, and which John the Baptist under God's direction had also used, as a mystical washing of the repentant sinner for the remission of sin, He deepened and expanded the emblematical rite, as He did everything else, for He filled all things with His own fulness. Hence we must no longer regard Baptism by water as merely a mystical washing in

order to cleanse us from our sins, but as a drowning or burying of the old man, and the raising out of that grave of sin and death a new man after the nature and image of Christ. In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul has taken great pains to explain to us what is done by the initiatory sacramental rite; and it will help us to understand his exposition, if we keep in mind the distinction between what is done *symbolically*, when we formally enter into covenant, and what is *actually* to be done to fulfil our covenant engagements. And we must also keep in mind the distinction between what we receive when we formally enter into covenant, and what we receive when and as we comply with the requirements of the covenant. For much may be done symbolically which is never actually performed; and nothing at all may be received in the symbol beyond the covenant guarantee that we shall have the power given to us just as we make the effort to exercise it, in the fulfilment of our covenant engagements. For instance, when the child was formally, and so far actually, circumcised, the separation unto God to which he was bound by covenant, and also the circumcising of the heart which the external rite symbolized, had both to be accomplished by faithful obedience to covenant obligations. The child was actually circumcised, but the heart was yet to be circum-

cised. We may therefore most justly say, that it was *a thing done, and yet to do.* As is circumcision —the type, such is Baptism—the antitype. And if this simple exposition had been regarded, it would have saved many men the trouble, may I not say the sin, of writing and reading some hundreds of volumes of fruitless and bitter controversy.

In the chapter now before us, and in the Epistle to the Galatians, we are plainly and expressly told that we are baptized into Christ; and Christians throughout all the Epistles are spoken of, not as being saved or justified by faith, but as being "in Christ,"—as "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ,"—as "established in Christ,"—as "speaking in Christ,"—as "walking in Christ,"—as "triumphing in Christ"; in short, we are said to be "complete in Him," (and that too, because we are baptized into Him,) who is the head of all principality and power;"—"buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. ii. 10, 12.) And we are also told, that by being baptized into Christ we are made the members of His body, "for we are all baptized by the one Spirit into the one body." But then here comes a matter which we ought all to know, but which, alas, I am afraid there are very many who do not know, at least who do not understand.

The Apostle says, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?" Now I agree with Bengel, when he says that the adult is here spoken of, who being a worthy candidate for Baptism, must have passed through the experience of justification, which the Apostle in the previous chapters has just been explaining. Still the important question remains to be answered, What is meant by being baptized into Christ's death? And the import of the terms is deepened and prevented from misrepresentation by the additional declaration, that we are planted by Baptism in the likeness of His death and in the likeness of His resurrection. Moreover, the word (συμφυτοι) which in our version is translated "planted together" is very significant; Cluverus translates it, engendered together—*connaturati*, endowed with the same nature together. *(Vide Bengel's Gnomon ad loc.)* It cannot but be very evident to every mind, I should think, that there can be no resemblance between us and Christ in respect of His death as an atoning sacrifice. This part of His work is infinitely above the scope of mere humanity, although it was in our nature that He suffered. It is the union of the Divinity with the humanity which gives to the sacrifice its infinity of meritorious and atoning efficacy. It is an event which stands alone, and above all other, in the history of eternity. It

is the grand centre whence all things proceed, to which all things look, and around which all things revolve, which bear upon the purpose of our existence and the eternity of our being. It was indeed foreshadowed by feeble and imperfect types, but it can have no adequate similitude. "He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him." There can be no planting in the likeness of, or becoming conformable to Christ's sacrificial death. We reap the benefits, and that too in the veriest fulness, if we are not unfaithful to the grace which has been given to us in Christ; but there is no imitating the Pattern, as far as the work of atonement is concerned, for it is in every sense inimitable. But there is a "dying of the Lord Jesus" which St. Paul was always bearing about in the body, and to which he was always striving with all earnestness to become conformable; and now the question is, What is this death of Christ to which He was obedient, and to which we are required by our covenant engagements to become conformable?

In handling a subject which is the most sacred of all, it behoveth us not merely to speak, but to think with reverence; and I have none other feeling when I venture to make a supposition, to which I would not have given expression were there not very necessary grounds, because of prevailing misconceptions, to seek to give distinctness

to sacred realities which are distinct in themselves. We all know that Christ as the sinners' substitute, and as an all-atoning sacrifice, laid down His life for us. It was a voluntary act;—"He offered up Himself;"—He was not compelled by the Father to do so;—"He Himself loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." In reference to His death as an atoning sacrifice, He saith, "I am the good shepherd." "I lay down my life for the sheep." "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." But along with this voluntary offering up of Himself, there was also an obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered," and was made "perfect through sufferings," and thus "became the author of *eternal salvation* unto all them *that obey Him.*" Now, let us suppose that our Lord had come into this world, not as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but as the world's owner and rightful King. Let us suppose that, in the pure humanity which He assumed, every kind of homage had been rendered

to Him, and that all kinds of luxuries and indulgences, which are not sinful in themselves, had been lovingly provided for His enjoyment. And let us suppose that all the grief He endured, "when His soul was made an offering for sins," had come directly from the hand of God. In such a case would His voluntary sacrificial death have been less atoning? Would not the broken law have been equally magnified and made honorable? Was it not the sin-bearing and the blood-shedding of the innocent, of the spotless humanity in its union with the Divinity, which rendered the sacrifice infinitely meritorious and all-atoning? What then—may we not reverently inquire—was the object and purpose of His humiliations, of His self-abasement in the form of a servant, of the privations, and of the contradiction of sinners which He endured? Why did He bear the cross, so afflictive to humanity, all the way from the manger even unto Golgotha? And why has He "commanded us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow Him;" yea, to be "crucified with Him," and thus to become "conformable to His death"? How was it that "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered;" that He was made "perfect by suffering;" and that "it became" God to make Him perfect through suffering, that He might become "the author of *eternal salvation* unto all that obey

Him?"—(it is not that believe in Him, observe, but "that obey Him?") And how is it that our becoming conformable unto His death, is always the condition of our being raised into newness of life by the power of His resurrection? I think there can be but one answer to all such questions, and it is this, that perfected virtue, and not innocent humanity, is the necessary condition of perfect union between Deity and humanity;—that in innocent humanity there is a creaturely will,—and that this creaturely will must be perfectly subjected to the Divine will before there can be the perfection of unity. God forbid that I should give the least apparent countenance to the heresy, that the hypostatical union of the Divine and human in the person of Christ was not perfect in its kind from the moment of our blessed Lord's conception. Still there are different kinds of perfection, just as there are different kinds of salvation; and while it is true that Christ always did the Father's will, and that most perfectly, it is also true, that the human will of Christ pleaded that "the cup, which the Father had given Him to drink, might pass from Him;" and we find that, after His obedience unto the death of the cross, Christ is said to have been perfected; yea, and after our Lord's resurrection the Father is represented as addressing Him thus, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," which seems

to indicate, that with regard to His humanity, Christ was now a Son, through His perfected obedience, in some sense of fulness and absolute perfection in which He had not been a Son before; and although these distinctions may be above our limited comprehension, they are doubtless sufficiently comprehensible to the Mind of God. We come then to this conclusion, that Christ both offered Himself up unto God as an atoning sacrifice voluntarily to save a ruined world, and that in making an atonement for the sins of the world He also perfected the subjection of His human will to the Divine will by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. This exposition seems to be confirmed by the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; where after most touchingly foretelling His death as the Sin-bearer, how He is "led as a lamb to the slaughter,"—how He is "cut off out of the land of the living,"—how He makes "His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death," the prophet adds these remarkable words: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands; He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." It is not, you observe, He shall see the condemned sinner set free and reconciled to God, but "He shall see

HIS SEED"; which reminds us of our Lord's words, when He was looking forward to His crucifixion: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

The death of Christ then, we may say, was complex in its character. There was a voluntary offering up of His life as an atoning sacrifice. There was also a perfect subjection of the human will to the Divine, under the greatest possible test, by an obedience unto death. And there was a twofold object gained in respect to us. First, by His voluntary offering up of Himself, our sins were atoned for; and because of this atonement we have reconciliation to God, remission of sins, and restoration to spiritual life which was forfeited by the fall; and secondly, by His obedience unto death Christ was not only perfected, but "He became the author of eternal salvation" from the dominant

power of the creaturely will "to all them that obey Him." As Adam *by disobedience* brought into our nature the foreign element of sin; so Christ, *by His obedience unto death*, brought into our nature His own dominant power of obedience unto the Divine will. Thus, He became the Federal Head of a new family, who through His power should become obedient unto the death of the creaturely will, so that they also might be united to God. The corn of wheat has died, and this new family is the product. He shall see *His seed*, and this seed shall be like unto Himself—partakers of the Divine nature as well as of the human. Hence, our standard of holiness is not *manliness*, under the influence of Divine grace, as was the case under the former dispensations, but *godliness*, because of our union with Christ our Federal Head. In this light, and in no other, we can fully understand what the Apostle means when he says, "Know ye not that so many of us as are baptized into Christ are baptized into His death." When God gave Christ unto us for a Covenant, He gave us in Christ a power to die unto that human will, which became so easily the subject of sin, even as Christ, by His self-denying, self-abasing life, and by His obedience unto the death of the cross, had died unto it; for Christ *has, and is, all Power;* it is said to be given unto Him, and that for the very purpose of im-

parting it to us. By being baptized into His death we become inheritors of this power, even as Adam's seed are inheritors of his sin; but there is this very important difference:—When sin entered our nature it simply took possession of it, for there was no counteracting power to be expelled to make room for it; but when the power of dying unto self is given to us, by our being baptized into Christ's death, sin having already possession, requires to be expelled; and thus, there is a twofold conflict—against the power of sin, and also against the dominance of the human will.

The whole matter now lies clearly before us. Christ has been given to us for our Covenant. This is the great promise which the Old Testament saints, who obtained a good report through faith, did not receive. This is "the better thing" which has been reserved for us, whereby we are made perfect. Christ as our Covenant differs from the law which was given on mount Sinai specially in this, that the law did not give, and could not give, the power of obedience. There was only the command, Thou shalt not do this and that, and, Thou shalt do this and that. But Christ our Covenant is all Power. God gives Him to us not only as our Pattern, but as our Power of obedience, which enables us to conform to the Pattern. By entering into this New Covenant, which we do in and by Bap-

tism, the power of His death and life comes into our very nature and being; but because of indwelling sin, which has pre-occupation and possession, we have the powers of Christ's life and death only *as we use them*. Like the man with the withered hand we must, in the spirit of humble obedience, stretch it out at our Lord's command. We must not say,—How can we stretch it out, for it is withered! In the act of obeying the power is always given; the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, and so is His transforming power. We must not look at our weakness, our inability, or at the small amount of our spiritual attainments, but at the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and it is our calling to become conformable unto Christ's death, that a new life, even the very life of Christ, may be imparted to us by the power of Christ's resurrection. AND THIS IS THE LAW OF THE COVENANT, as I have before observed. The planting in the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection is a covenant planting. The powers to die and to rise into newness of life are there for us, and by entering into covenant we come under a solemn obligation to use them; and so far as we do use them, we become conformable to the death and life of Christ. It is a thing done, and yet to do. It is done symbolically by the outward rite, for we are baptized into His death;

by Baptism we are buried with Him; and by Baptism we are planted into the likeness both of His death and life. We are not put under the water, in order to wash the old man, but to bury him; and the water that is sprinkled upon the child, instead of immersion, is not for the washing of the child; it is the throwing of earth into its grave, (*Vide Bengel. et Conf. the Spiritualists and the Fathers,*) and when we are raised up out of the water, it is symbolical of a resurrection, through the power of Christ's resurrection, into newness of life. So far as the symbol is concerned, it is complete in significance, and the thing is done. Formally, it is also done. The justified adult promises to renounce the world, to die unto self, to resist the devil, and to obey Christ; and having thus pledged himself, he is formally buried and raised again; and Christ ratifies His promise by actually giving Himself to him, *as a Power to be used,* that he may be enabled to die unto self daily, by renouncing all that self feeds upon, and to live in the newness of Christ's life unto God. It is thus, as I have said, a thing done, and yet to do; for the power to die unto self is only effective as it is exercised, and the power to live is only given as the daily dying unto self progresses. Hence the Apostle not only says, Ye are dead, and ye are buried, but he immediately adds "therefore die;" ye are buried and risen with and in

Christ by sacrament and covenant, therefore "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God," and act as such. Do not suffer sin to reign in your mortal body, nor "yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but *yield yourselves unto God,* as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." I thank God that this whole chapter admits of no other intelligent exposition; and I am also thankful, that the explanation before us is in perfect accordance both with the teaching and the practice of all who have gone before us, to whom the Church has given the designation of saints. But, alas, where are the saints in these days! How can there be any, so long as "the faith once delivered to the saints" continues to be systematically ignored.

If we turn to the second and third chapters of the Epistle to the Colossians, we shall find the same teaching, the same line of argument, and precisely the same kind of exhortation. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him;" for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power; in whom ye are also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the

circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, *through the faith of the operation of God*, who hath raised Him from the dead." "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" "Seeing ye are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. *For ye are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;* fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." "Seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed (incorrectly rendered *is renewed*) in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him." You perceive we have here again *the thing done, and yet to do*,—the being dead, and yet the exhortation to die; the being risen, and yet the exhortation to rise; and is it not strange how the intelligent mind can satisfy itself as to the meaning of such passages, when the Baptismal Covenant is not understood, as they cannot be made to apply with even the semblance of consistency to

anything else? I may here observe, that because we have indwelling sin to be cleansed away, as well as a creaturely will to be subjected to the Divine will, the two works require to be done together, and often by the same means, and therefore they are often mixed up together in the same passage; but whenever the expression "created anew" is employed, as in the above quotation, there is always a direct reference to the work or covenant of regeneration.

Now the teaching of the Prayer Book is in perfect accordance with the teaching of the Word, as I have endeavoured to expound it. In the baptismal office all that is sacramental is simply the baptizing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. By this act we are sacramentally regenerated, and the benefits which flow from justification are sealed unto such as are already in the state of justification. Then we have the formal and solemn Covenant between Christ and the person or persons to be baptized. After describing what Baptism is and what it does, which part of our subject we shall enter upon when the Baptism of children is considered, and after assuring the persons to be baptized that Christ will perform His part of the Covenant, and therefore, they must also promise, that they will renounce the devil and all his works,

and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep His commandments. Then comes the formal demand: "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" The answer is, "I renounce them all." The next question is in effect, —Dost thou believe all the articles in the Apostle's Creed, which is rehearsed? The answer is, "All this I stedfastly believe." Then "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" The answer is, "That is my desire." And then, "Wilt thou obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" And the answer is, "I will endeavour to do so, God being my helper." If ever there were a solemn vow and covenant, here it is; and in so constructing the office, the object and spirit of the Christian Covenant of regeneration has evidently been kept in view. The prayers, which follow, more fully and clearly set forth the object of the Covenant than even the obligatory promises. "O merciful God, grant that *the old Adam* in these persons may be so buried, that *the new man* may be raised up in them. Grant that all carnal affections may die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them. Grant that they may

have power, and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world and the flesh." In the office for the ministration of Baptism to infants, we have the following remarkable thanksgiving, evidently constructed upon the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, amounting almost to a quotation from it. After giving thanks for the regeneration of the infant it thus proceeds: "And humbly we beseech thee to grant, that he, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, *may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin;* and that as he is made partaker of the death of Thy Son, *he may also be partaker* of His blessed resurrection; so that finally, with the residue of thy Holy Church, *he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom*, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is worthy of notice that when, in the Church Catechism, Baptism is spoken of as an initiatory rite, and as a formal, sacramental, covenant act, the child is said to be made an inheritor of the kingdom. Here on the other hand, where that which is actual, not that which is formal, is spoken of, we pray *that* he may *finally* be an inheritor of God's everlasting kingdom. The last quotation I shall make from the office, I have already given, but as this is its proper place I must give it again; it is as follows—"Remembering alway, that

Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, *and to be made like unto Him;* that as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." Here also, you perceive, we have the thing done and yet to do, we are dead and yet to die, risen and yet to rise.

If the baptismal office were altered then the whole Prayer Book must be altered, for the entire book is God's witness to the self-same teaching, that is, to what may be specially and emphatically called Christian truth. For instance, in the Collect for Christmas-day we pray that we may be daily renewed by the Holy Spirit, because we have been regenerated; and in the Collect for Easter Even, we ask God to grant, that as we are baptized *into the death* of His blessed Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ, *so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him.* Here again, as ever, we have the thing done, and yet to do. For our Easter anthem we have part of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in singing which we are to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then in the epistle, we are exhorted to "mortify

our members which are upon the earth;" and almost all the epistles are of the same self-denying character, and have reference to the regenerate life. The teaching for the present week, (the nineteenth after Trinity,) is a fair sample of the general teaching of the Church, and is only remarkable because it presents to us such a beautiful epitome of the Christianity for which it witnesses, and in which it instructs the Church's children. In the Gospel for the Sunday, which serves for the week, we have the cure of the poor helpless paralytic, whom we may regard either as the type of the unhappy backslider, or of the awakened sinner. He has the desire to go to Christ, but he has not the power. Besides, there are apparently insuperable obstacles to the accomplishment of his desire. Why not await some more favorable opportunity? O no; the truly awakened sinner cannot wait. The necessities of the case demand that immediate relief which Christ alone can give. It is ever, *to-day*, and not to-morrow, both with the awakened sin-sick soul, and with Christ: and if ordinary means cannot remove the obstructions in the way, extraordinary ones must be resorted to; and the Holy Spirit can always command suitable instrumentalities, and can always provide for every emergency. Men of faith are used, and honored. There is no access by the door, but the roof can be

uncovered; and soon the blissful words are heard, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Then follows the accusation of blasphemy against Christ by the Scribes and Pharisees; while the multitude marvel and glorify God, and the restored paralytic takes up his bed and walks, thus giving the best and most incontrovertible evidence of a perfect cure. But after this type of conversion to God, we have in the Epistle (Eph. iv. 17) the walk of the paralytic, contrasted with that which supersedes it—the walk of the Christian, throughout which we have Christ to teach us, and Christ the lesson to be learned. The old man is put off; there is a renewal in the spirit of the mind day by day, and finally the new man is put on, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In the proper Lesson for the morning service we have a typical but most beautiful illustration of the regenerate life. Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego are brought before us; who unitedly constitute a reflection of the Adorable Trinity; for Shadrack means the meek and lowly one; Meshach, the mighty one; and Abednego the minister of light, or the light-giver, recalling to our minds the glorious promise, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Their answer to the threat of the fiery furnace is so

Christ-like, that it exemplifies, rather than foreshadows, Christianity; so beautifully are meekness and firmness combined; "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But *if not*, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." And then we behold Him who strengthens and upholds His fellow-sufferers walking up and down in the midst of the fiery furnace. This again is backed up by the second Lesson, (Luke xii.) which although incidental, is in singular accordance with the teaching of the day, as is very frequently the case. "My friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God," etc. In the afternoon, the deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions, and the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, calling upon us to put on the whole armour of God, complete the teaching for the day. The teaching of the Prayer Book is only undervalued by those who do not know it, or who cannot understand it; but it is all in harmony, and a part cannot be taken from it without doing an injury to the whole.

There is a sect of earnestly religious persons, who would do much greater service to the cause of God, if they would keep to the work of evangelizing instead of indulging their unhappy mania for proselytising, amongst whom are to be found some writers of great ability, and possessing a considerable amount of spiritual light, who are attempting to grasp some of the Church's Teaching —treasure, it may be said, stolen from the field, not found in it, yet real treasure, which Evangelicals have ignored, and to which they are consequently blinded. But these persons, in separating themselves from the Church have deprived themselves of the guidance of her clear and orthodox teaching, and are bitterly prejudiced against God's witness to those very truths which they are evidently striving to comprehend and to make their own. They seem to imagine that our Lord's death was not only a vicarious atonement, but a vicarious dying to the human will, and a vicarious living unto God, which through faith is accounted to them by way of imputation. That, in short, because they believe that Christ died and rose again for them, they will both die to self and live to God; and that they have only patiently to wait the progress of regeneration in themselves, in the assured confidence that He who has begun the good work in them will carry it on unto its completion; and that any

attempt at co-operation will only hinder the work of God within them; just as some sentimentalists imagine that because they believe in our Lord's second advent, they are sure to be of the number of the saints whom the Lord will bring with Him at His coming. But the self-denying, world-renouncing, cross-bearing precepts of the Gospel constitute the actual demands of the Christian Covenant. They are no sentimentalisms, but stern realities. We must die unto our creaturely will just as truly and really as Christ died unto it, and rise unto newness of life just as truly as Christ rose from the dead; else our ideas about regeneration, however brilliantly they may be expressed, are but shadowy dreams which foster delusion. The power to die and to rise is given to us at Baptism by Covenant, and sufficient help is provided and insured for its exercise, but if we do not exercise it there will be no regeneration. This may sound very like legality, and as such it may be accounted; but it is the *legality of the New Covenant.* True, we are not under the law but under grace; but let us not forget "that we are under the law to Christ;" and that we are "bound to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." After our high calling is expounded, and our high privileges are recounted in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, then follows the most solemn and

fearful exhortation which is to be found in the Word of God: "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." There is "a perfect law of liberty that we are to look into;" and "a law of Christ which we are to fulfil;" and there is "a law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which makes us free from the law of sin and death." Blessed be God, we do not go a warfare in our own strength, or at our own charges; but fight we must, else we shall never overcome; yea, and if we do not overcome, even as Christ overcame, we shall never sit down with Him on His throne as He has sat down on the Father's throne. The righteousness of the saints is a real righteousness, not an imputed righteousness; and the holiness which is the fruit of our being created anew in Christ Jesus is a true holiness. There is nothing vicarious here, all is federal, the result of a real contract for the performance of which ample provision is made by the Covenant. We have not only the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and to work in, and through, and by us; but we are baptized into

Christ, and Christ is given to us for our Covenant, so that we are not only in Christ but Christ is in us.

What the Law could not do, Christ has done. He has condemned sin in the flesh. The foreign element—the usurper, is not merely to be kept in check by grace, but it is to be expelled. The righteousness of the law is to be fulfilled *in us*, and not merely fulfilled *for us*. The nature, life, and Spirit of Christ are given to us, and "if Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness; and if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in us;" and this is the law, not of Moses, but of Christ; "if we live after the flesh we shall die, but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body we shall live." "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; *if so be that we suffer with Him*, that we may be also glorified together."

When the great Macarius was asked by one of his scholars what was meant by being dead and buried with Christ—he did not reply, "Christ has died, and you must believe that you died in Christ;" but he said, "Go out to the burial ground, and take this staff in your hand, and when

you come to such a grave beat it well, and tell the corpse that lies buried there what a wicked wretched sinner he was while he was yet living; and then return to me." The youth returned, and said, "Father, I have done what you directed me to do;" and Macarius asked him if the dead man made any answer, or if he attempted to justify himself? The youth said, "There was no retaliation, and he made me no reply." "Go again," said Macarius, "and when you come to our good brother's grave, who was so lately buried, remind him of the holy life he led, and of the great good he was the instrument of doing while he was yet alive, and return to me." When the youth returned the holy father said to him, "Did he seem pleased by your flatteries?" "O," said the youth, "there was no response." "Go then," said Macarius, "and practise what you have learned; for you cannot fail now to understand what is meant by being buried with Christ."

Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and a long catalogue of other worthies are brought before us, in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as having obtained a good report through faith; but as having not received the promise of Christ, the Incorruptible Seed, the *Life* of them that believe, although He was their Saviour as well as ours. Their piety was manliness, under

the influence of Divine grace; not godliness, the fruit of the regeneration. It was true human nobility in Abraham to give battle to the five kings for the rescue of Lot. But Jesus was no earthly warrior. His kingdom was not of this world. He would not even suffer His friends to fight for Him that He might be delivered from the Jews. Moses held up his hands to ensure the destruction of the Amalekites; but Jesus came not to destroy men's lives, and His hands were stretched out to save His murderers. The slaughter of the Philistines was David's glory; but the pouring out of His life's blood to make an atonement for the sins of a guilty world is the glory of Christ. Samuel hewed the suppliant Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal; but no suppliant ever cried to Jesus for mercy in vain. Bless the Lord, O my soul, we are not called to manliness, but to godliness. We will neither have Abraham, nor Moses, nor Samuel, nor David; Christ is ours, glory be to His name; and *it is Christ in us* which is our hope of glory.

This letter is already too long, but I have done my best to compress, within the compass of a long letter, matters for thought which it would require volumes to expound as they ought to be expounded; but enough has been said to establish the important truth, that they who repudiate the teaching of the Prayer Book on the subject of regeneration, which

is the transcendent glory of the present dispensation, repudiate Christianity, and mistake the faith of Abraham for the life of Christ.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER V.

The Church's Teaching in the Baptismal Office.

MY DEAR SIR,

My last letter, which cost me much thought, has not I trust made an unfavourable impression upon your mind. For nearly a quarter of a century I have been somewhat at-home in my subject; but it is a difficult matter to place a whole system of Divine truth, so to speak, in an intelligible form, even before men of no ordinary capacity, who have been unaccustomed to such a line of thought, and mayhap have been not a little prejudiced against it; and that not without reason. May I not also hope that the conviction is gaining strength, that the Prayer Book is not a compound of truth and error? I have endeavoured to show, and I trust with some success, that it is at least consistent with itself, and therefore it must either be all truth or all error.

It is a strange fact, nevertheless it is a fact, that to the unconverted Churchman, who conceives it to be all right, it is virtually all wrong; and to the Evangelical, who imagines that it is all wrong, it is actually all right. The unconverted Churchman has nothing to do with the Prayer Book. The Chapel, where there is no Prayer Book, is the proper place for him. There he will hear awakening discourses, and the doctrine of justification by faith explained and enforced; and this is just what he requires, that he may be converted to God. There is very little about conversion to be found in the Prayer Book, save occasionally in the Lessons for the day, where believers are reminded of "the hole of the pit" whence they have been dug; for it was never intended for the use of unconverted persons; and when they use it, they take a false position before God; and their utter ignorance of their real spiritual condition is their only excuse for doing so. They assume the character of worshippers and intercessors, while their only prayer ought to be, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But what have converted persons to do with Chapel prayers or Chapel discourses, unless they go to Chapel for the express purpose of assisting in conversion work? They ought not to be listeners to a minister's prayers, but assistants in a service of worship. There will be no praying in heaven, but there will

be worship there; and they ought now, as saved souls, to be doing on earth what they expect to do in heaven. And, instead of listening to sermons which have for their very marrow the doctrine of justification by faith—which, if they really be converted, they must know as much about as their preacher,—they ought to be listening to expositions of the Church's teaching, which, if rightly expounded, brings before them the life-long work and progress of the regeneration, and presents unto them, in beautiful order, the very truths which are needful for their edification.

The Prayer Book has nothing to do with Evangelicalism; and it can only be seen in its proper light when it is viewed in the light of Christianity. Yet Evangelicalism is not adverse to Christianity, but the very preparation for it. I thank God that in addressing myself to you, and through you to Evangelicals of every denomination, having for my object the restoration of Christian unity, I have no occasion to ask either you or them to sacrifice one single truth, or even to abandon one single principle which you or they may hold, except only such as are divisive, and belong only to the spirit of party. The adoption of such principles has been forced upon many an honest mind; but I trust the time is at hand, when all who name the Name of Jesus will be given to see that divisive principles are

antichristian. When I emerged, some twenty-eight years ago, from the Evangelical school, I was relentlessly accused of having abandoned both my God and my creed; but the truth is, I had abandoned neither, but had only left the Alphabet and begun to read; and it was only by the help of the Alphabet that I was, through God's grace, enabled to read. In the light of Christianity, (for I utterly deny the charge of having constructed a new theory of my own,) I have done my best to make the truth manifest to every spiritual mind, that we ought to be converted to God before we are baptized into Christ; for previous to our conversion we are not reconciled to God, and therefore we are not in a position to enter into covenant with Him, or to be made the *living* members of the Church, which is the body of Christ. The mere act of Baptism will not make us so, unless we are already in the state of justification. I do not think that Evangelicals will object to this truth, because it is very much in accordance with their own views; but then I must add, and I do not mean to do it in an offensive way, that the all of religion which they profess to have, they ought to have *before* they are admitted into the Church. I do not deny that there is progress in the *spiritual* life, the life I mean of the justified man who has not recognized his high calling as a Christian. It is indeed far

too generally the case that the first few days of such a man's life—those which immediately follow his conversion—are his best days; but this ought not to be so, for all true life is progressive; and the spiritual life is a true life, the effect of the Holy Spirit's action and indwelling; but the spiritual life is not the regenerate life. The spiritual life is common to all the dispensations, while the regenerate life belongs exclusively to Christianity. The converted man may be baptized, but unless he comply with the conditions of the regenerate life, by dying daily to self, by mortifying his earthly affections, and renouncing all that self feeds upon, he will abide merely in the spiritual state into which he was brought by justification, notwithstanding his Baptism, and never arise into the life of Christ. There must be an actual death before there can be a real resurrection. It is a faithful saying, which no man will ever be able successfully to controvert, that "if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him; and if we suffer we shall also reign with Him;" but "if we deny Him He also will deny us;" and if we do not, like the Apostle, bear about always in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life of Jesus will not be manifested in our mortal flesh. When we come to Christianity, that is, to conformity to Christ's death, and to the manifestation of His life through the indwelling of

Christ in the power of His resurrection, then we come to realities of the highest order. Romish charms, visionary theories, and the efficacy of priestly acts, will do nothing for us here. All is real. Dying unto self is real work, although there are thousands of converted persons who do not know what it means, simply because they abide in the Chapel, where justification by faith is their food, instead of coming to the Prayer Book, where the nature and work of regeneration is explained to them by the Word of God; for the Prayer Book does not employ the language of men, but elucidates spiritual things by spiritual, and selects for us such passages and portions from the Word as are calculated to bring before us, in edifying order, the whole counsel of God.

There is no real difference between the piety and the spiritual state of the Evangelical who makes justification by faith the central truth of his system, although he submits to the ordinance of Baptism and partakes occasionally of the Lord's Supper, and that of the Quaker who repudiates the Christian sacraments altogether, because justification by faith is also the central truth of the Quaker's system, although he expresses that truth in a different way. The Christian sacraments are in effect a dead letter to the Evangelical, as far as the high Christian realities are concerned, which they symbolize and

convey to the prepared recipient. And there is no essential difference, as I observed in my former letter, between the piety and spiritual state of Abraham and that of the Evangelical. Believers under the present dispensation have light in the veriest fulness upon the grounds of their justification. The object of faith has been made manifest, and the way of obtaining salvation ought to be, and I thank God it very generally is, familiar even to our children. But this light does not create a difference of state. Abraham has not lost, and never will lose, the honourable title which God conferred upon him, of being "the father of all them that believe." But there were believers before the time of Abraham. Our Lord saith, "Before Abraham was, I AM." He was just as really the Saviour of all who were saved from Abel to John the Baptist as He is our Saviour. Still, it is equally true that Abraham preceded Christ; and so also must Evangelicalism, I mean the faith of Evangelicals, always precede Christianity. There can be no true Christianity, as I have repeatedly said, unless it be preceded by the faith of Evangelicals. But Evangelicalism is stretched altogether beyond its measure when it is regarded as anything more than a *preparation* for Christianity; for, most certainly, Christianity it is not. Christ never stood in need either of conversion or justification; but He

learned obedience and was made perfect; and if we give Christianity its distinctive meaning, it is *conformity to Christ*. The Bible is never in fault in small things or in great, and whatever is recorded is for our edification; and the Bible tells us, that to the *disciples*, or the followers and learners of Christ, the name of Christians was first given; and no man is a Christian indeed unless he be a learner and follower of Christ; and this he can only be when Christ dwells within him. Now, as the faith of Evangelicals is actually the preparation for Christianity, the Prayer Book is the very book which ought to be put into their hands to lead them onward to the realization of the regenerate life. It is an unreal book in any other hands. And if Evangelicals will apply themselves to master it, instead of regarding it with suspicion and dislike, or merely extolling it as a composition, which it has become the fashion to do, they may happily imbibe its Catholicism of spirit, and be led to participate in its higher aspirations. By God's help they will make the discovery, that it is a much higher and holier exercise of soul to give unto God what is His due, than to be continually crying unto Him for what we want; although this, because of our necessities, must always form a part of our devotional services; and the intelligent, devotional use of the Prayer Book will win them away from

that religious selfishness which regards personal profit as the supreme end of religious ordinances, or which craves for religious excitement, or an unwholesome species of mental enjoyment, for which the preacher is expected to make provision. These soul-degrading views and tendencies, only too common both in Church and Chapel, the Prayer Book is eminently adapted to correct, as it affords us just the kind of help we need, in our attempts to offer up a holy and reasonable and acceptable service unto Him to whom worship belongeth. There is a great difference between the excitement produced by a fervent extemporaneous prayer, although even this is not without its use, and that expansion of the heart which prepares for the reception of Divine love; and care has been taken in the construction of the Prayer Book that the mind shall be stored with what really tends to godly edifying, during the blessed intercourse which takes place between heaven and earth, when the service is a living service, and when the ministrations are what they ought to be. But the worship of unconverted Churchmen can neither be in spirit nor in truth; and so far from their use of the Prayer Book being either acceptable to God or profitable to themselves, it can only deepen their delusion, and make their conversion more difficult; and yet the cause of

truth is in a certain way subserved by this very sad anomaly which is so injurious to themselves.

Unconverted Churchmen have laid hold of Church truths objectively, and I bless God, who has led them to do so; for, if this had not been the case these truths would have had few witnesses, and those for the most part only the hidden ones of God. The taking of the child Jesus down into Egypt symbolises a principle in the Divine Government which has a great variety of applications. Mentally, yea, and religiously, unconverted men have been God's witnesses for Church truths. Vitally they cannot be, for the words of Christ will ever be true, "Except ye be converted ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and, certainly those who cannot be, while in their unconverted state, living subjects of the kingdom, though they may have been incorporated into the visible Church, and brought under the obligations of the Christian Covenant, by a sacramental act, are equally incapable of bearing a living witness to the truths of the kingdom. But God can, and does, use unconverted men, as well as the converted, to effect His own purposes, and He is never at a loss for instrumentalities to defend and preserve His truth. Even "the wicked are God's sword, and the men of this evil world are thy hand O Lord." Objective truth owes

its preservation, under God, far more to the labours of unconverted men, who have scrupulously adhered to the letter of the Word in their expositions, than to the converted, who have, generally speaking, taken very unwarrantable liberties with the letter, that it might assume the appearance of sanctioning their own discursive notions, and restrictive theories. It is, however, a great consolation to know that some of those who laboured most assiduously to exhibit truth objectively, as for instance, Butler and Paley, were mercifully given to realize it subjectively before they were removed from the sphere of their labours. Evangelicals have not given this sovereign, over-ruling, and all-provident power of God, the thoughtful consideration which might have been expected from spiritually enlightened men; hence they have very erroneously concluded, that because unconverted men are witnesses for Church truth, Church truth can be no truth at all, but a mere superstition, a tradition, a legality, a delusion, or more or less of all of them put together. They have consequently given it the whole weight of their most hearty opposition, not unmingled with considerable bitterness; and they have only tolerated it at all, or lent it an unwilling and reserved compliance when they could not do otherwise. We all know that unconverted men are under a total delusion

when they hope to receive, or imagine they do receive, the grace of justification through the ordinances of the Church; and because this is clearly discerned, Evangelicals, by way of denouncing so fatal an error, have taken upon themselves the fearful responsibility of virtually repudiating Church truths altogether, and of accounting the Christian sacraments as little more, if anything more at all, than ceremonial rites. I do not wish to characterize such conduct as it deserves to be characterized. It is small excuse to say that it is not done in wilfulness, for it argues a very unhealthy and presumptuous state of mind when men, who have a measure of spiritual light, can so unscrupulously reduce Christian truth and holiness to the Abrahamic standard, and thereby virtually ignore the Church, and actually blind their own eyes to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Because converted men have a right understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith, and have realized its saving power, it is a great mistake to imagine that therefore they must be essentially right in their conceptions of Divine truth, or at least not very seriously or dangerously wrong. This most lamentable delusion has engendered and fostered a self-satisfied and presumptuous assurance, and a boastful unteachableness and absolutism, which have done more harm to the cause of truth than all the direct opposition it has

met with. I do not wish to give offence, but when truth demands it I must not shrink from giving a candid statement of unpleasant facts. I can only say that I speak of converted men as one of themselves, not as an enemy, but as a friend and brother in Christ. In very faithfulness I am bound to say that, as a general rule, when there has not been previous discipline of a self-restraining character, the converted man who settles down contentedly in the state of justification, or who becomes the eager propagator of the one truth, and the zealous labourer in conversion work, without aspiring earnestly after deeper self-knowledge and the higher truths of Christianity, has only realized enough of truth to make him self-confident, and too little to lead him to become a humble learner in the school of Christ. The consequence is, his measure of light never extends beyond the very limited boundary-line of his own experience, and he conceives in the vanity of his mind that there is nothing beyond which it is worth his while to learn. Such a man is the veriest babe both in grace and in the knowledge of Divine truth, although he may form a very different estimate of himself; according to St. Paul he is yet "carnal, and walks as men"; but because he is the conscious possessor of a measure of grace, all the headiness, wilfulness, and self-confidence of the natural spirit

are manifested under the presumed sanction of the Spirit of grace; and this most unhappy delusion makes his assurance more assured, and his wilfulness the more wilful. By such men the nature, object, and proper work of the Covenant of Regeneration are not discerned. They say truly, that they cannot find them in the Bible; but the suspicion never enters their mind that perhaps they may not have looked for them as they ought to have done, or that possibly the fault may be in their own want of greater Divine illumination, which is caused by the very delusive supposition that they are rich and possessed of goods and have need of nothing.

Evangelicals do not appreciate the Prayer Book because the doctrine of justification by faith is not prominently exhibited in any part of it, excepting in the Articles, which is its proper place. There is no need, as I have already shown, of its being made conspicuous in any other place. But indeed it is against the nature of things that they should appreciate the Liturgy until it is given them to see the Covenant of Regeneration; for in their present spiritual state it must be the most unsatisfactory manual of devotion that could be compiled. But as soon as their understandings are opened to comprehend the nature and object of the New Covenant, they will not only see the Prayer Book in a new light, but the Bible will also be to them a

new book, and they will find that it means all that it says, and that such a thing as the hyperbolical language of the East was never employed either by our Lord or His Apostles, and is not to be found in all its pages. When the time shall arrive, should it ever arrive until our Lord's advent, that the Bible and the Prayer Book are seen in the light of Christianity, all our differences and divisions will at once disappear; but so long as unconverted Churchmen, who have the theory of Christianity in their minds, will persist in reading them, without that enlightening measure of the Spirit which is always and only imparted when we are justified, and so long as Evangelicals will persist in reading them in the light of justification, as if that were the ultimate object and purpose of God, while they exclude from their minds the theory of Christianity and the true and glorious prize of God's high calling, it is in vain to expect the reconciliation of our differences, and the restoration of Christian unity will be impossible.

The greatest admirers of the Prayer Book, at least those who understand it best, do not consider it a perfect production. It is, indeed, far from being so. And yet the intelligent student will see more of the hand of God than the work of man in it. When two parties of widely different sentiments compile a book, and both sides must exercise the

greatest caution in giving expression to their views lest they should be altogether rejected, and at the same time be jealously on the watch to restrict the views of their opponents within the narrowest bounds, lest they should directly contradict their own, we cannot expect that there should be that richness and fulness of genial thought which flows from a heart that enters devotedly into the spirit of the subject. But thus it was throughout the long protracted and oft interrupted compilation of the Prayer Book. The Book has been both stigmatised and lauded as a convenient compromise; but I cannot regard it in any such light. It presents to me an unmistakeable evidence of our blessed Lord's unalterable faithfulness, who gave unto us the precious promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The history of the Prayer Book, from the time that it began to emerge out of the superstition of Popery, until it assumed its present form, is a continuous and wonderful manifestation of the over-ruling power of God; and the crowning fact stands before us, that there is not one doctrine which has any rightful claim to be accounted catholic, to which it does not witness, nor is there one opinion which can be justly accused of heterodoxy, to which it gives its sanction. I say all this as a fitting introduction, although it may not be a very

legitimate one, to the consideration of the subject which has most of all perplexed the mind and troubled the conscience of our Evangelical brethren, I mean the office for the ministration of Baptism to infants, which, by God's help, I shall now endeavour to expound; and I am sure we shall find that the Church's teaching beautifully manifests that motherly spirit which is a true reflection of the Spirit of her Lord.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. The previous dispensations were but foreshadowings of the fulness of truth which is now revealed, and of the rich abundance of grace which is now being bestowed. In the former dispensations, He that careth even for cattle, evinced His Fatherly love for the children of His covenanted people; for, by His express command they were consecrated to Him on the eighth day, which was typical of Christ's resurrection, and admitted into Covenant as their fathers had been. How came it then ever to be conceived that in God's abounding fulness of grace towards us our children were overlooked or forgotten? We may depend upon it, if our understandings have been opened to the light of Christianity, we shall be at no loss to discover that our most loving Father has made a most

suitable provision out of the riches of His grace, and in accordance with the nature and the highest object of the dispensation for the children of His covenanted and redeemed people.

I thank God that we are not under the law of commandments; and, because we are not, it is contrary to the nature, spirit, and object of our dispensation that everything we have to do should be put forth to us or laid down before us in the form of a commandment. We are not merely servants, but sons, and the loving spirit of a dutiful child easily discovers what is the Father's will. There is an obedience which is the servant's duty, but there is also an obedience which is the fruit of filial love, and this is the Father's delight. And yet there is no want of direction, but it is given in such a way as to free us from the spirit of bondage, and to call into exercise the spirit of filial love. Christ is not only our Covenant; He is also our Book of the Covenant, our rule of life, our sure, our safe, and our most lovely Pattern in all things. When He gave commission to baptize all nations, who would have supposed that such a notion would ever have been conceived, as some have taken pains to propagate, that our children were intended to be excluded? And when St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared that the promise of remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit through the death

and resurrection of Christ, was unto the assembled thousands *and to their children*, and to all that are afar off, what kind of cavilling is this which alleges that children does not mean children? If succeeding generations *of believers* had been only meant, why is no such restriction of the term expressed or implied? Why is the very term used which includes both children and succeeding generations? Mention is made more than once of whole households having been baptized; why, in such cases do we find that a restriction of such importance is not even alluded to, and cannot therefore justly be inferred?

There is a doctrine which the faithful in all ages have believed, and which David expresses in this short sentence, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" and can we realize the loving Fatherhood of God, and rejoice in Him with joyous confidence, and yet give place in our minds or hearts to the abhorrent conception, that in this dispensation of the fulness of grace our children are left under the curse of inherited sin, until their natural faculties are sufficiently developed to enable them to comprehend God's remedial economy, and until grace is vouchsafed to them to avail themselves of its saving provisions? Infancy is the most important period of life for breaking the natural will, for moral

culture, and for implanting Christian principles in the virgin soil. This can be done, and ought always to be done, along with the earliest development of the intellect; even should the training be legal, seeing "the heir, as long as he is a child, is under tutors and governors, and differeth nothing from a servant," yet is it not without its value, and to the Christian parent it is a matter of positive obligation that the child should be trained up in the way in which he should go, and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It will be found, in the great day of the Lord, that those who have been so brought up have, as a general rule, exemplified the highest order of pure Christian piety, and, like St. Paul and Timothy, have done sure and abiding work for God, and borne the noblest witness to the holy principles of our Faith. I deny not the correlative truth, that he loveth much who has had much forgiven; but let it be remembered that it is only a correlative truth, and does not militate against our present assertion. Nor should we forget that there is a higher love than that of gratitude; and we find now, by sad experience, when such training has been neglected, that religious zeal is too often accompanied with self-importance and wilfulness, and, that the piety which seems to be the most fervent, is far from being free from selfish instincts, and the arrogance and vanity of the natural

spirit. Now, I am bound to say, that the earthly parent who neglects the moral culture and the education of his child in Christian principles, is both a guilty and a cruel parent. Can the Father of fathers be amenable to such a charge? Has He surrendered the vantage ground of infancy to the enemy? Has He left the children of His children in a state of helpless orphanage, as far as heavenly Fatherhood is concerned, under the positive curse of a broken law, and subject to the merciless influences and polluting dominion of the destroyer of souls?

Absolute dogmatism, like party spirit, is fearfully antichristian both in principle and in tone. It is most unscrupulous as to what premises it may assume, and cruelly reckless as to what inferences may be drawn from them, or what conclusions they may involve. We come into the world, says the dogmatist, with the entail of original sin. This is true. We are justified by faith, and by faith only. This also is true. Infants are incapable of faith, therefore they cannot be justified by faith: This is not only true but self-evident. And what next? Consequently they must abide, during their nonage, under the wrath of God and the curse of the broken law: This is most untrue; and to say so is to be guilty of the sin of the Israelites in the wilderness, who grieved, and tempted, and provoked

God, "and *limited* the Holy One of Israel." Such unworthy and unwarrantable conceptions actually impugn the wisdom and goodness, the mercy and justice, and above all the loving Fatherhood of God. I thank God that Christianity utterly excludes and repudiates them, as offensively adverse to its purer light, and its loving spirit. And yet this very dogmatism, offensive though it be in its general aspects, has done good service as a defence against error, and as a witness for an all-important class of truth, although it couples with this the most unlovely kind of error. To it, under God, we chiefly owe the check which has been, to some extent, effectively, given to that most fatal assumption, which has done more than anything else to unchristianize Christianity, namely, that we are placed by Baptism in the state of justification.

The Church has a difficult part to perform as God's witness for the doctrine of justification by faith, and also as His witness for the baptismal regeneration of the children of His covenanted people, and by His help, nobly, and wisely, and faithfully has she performed it. That this very important part of our exposition may be seen and read as a whole, I shall unhesitatingly reiterate any portion of my former statements which may serve the purpose of elucidation.

The Church has unequivocally declared in her

eleventh Article that we are justified by faith, and by faith only. Had she either stated or hinted that we are justified in or by Baptism, she would have contradicted herself. Happily, she is perfectly guiltless of any such false and fatally delusive teaching; for along with this unqualified declaration in the eleventh Article, she tells us in her Catechism that she requires repentance and faith of her adult candidates for Baptism, and this is tantamount to conversion or justification. The Church never contradicts the teaching of her Lord, else she would cease to be a dependable pillar and ground of the truth, and our Lord not only says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not *enter* into the kingdom of heaven," but He also says, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And then we have His exhortation; "Strive, (as in a great contest,) *to enter in* at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Now, infant Baptism is not a strait gate; and if our High Church brethren will persist in maintaining that the unconscious infant is justified in or by Baptism, we must ask them, Where do they place this strait gate which our Lord calls the *entrance* gate? What is it? Where is it? And how did they struggle through it? Alas, they have no

strait gate, and this is the one great want which makes their whole system unreal. If they could but see the gate, (and it stands in its proper place between Baptism and Confirmation,) they would become the true living sons of the Church—the living members of the body of Christ; and their light would so shine within and through, and from the Church, and there would be so much of the beauty of holiness in her services, that the spiritual and intelligent among Nonconformists would soon be attracted to her, and would become the most grateful and faithful of her children. The strait gate is wanting, not in the Church, but in the High Church system; and therefore the system is lifeless, and tends to perpetuate the reign of spiritual death. In common honesty then it behoves us to ask; Is conversion, or the entering into the state of justification, the strait gate to which our Lord alludes? Is this entering into the state of justification, the self-same thing which Evangelicals mean when they speak of being born again of the Spirit? Beyond all doubt these questions can only be answered aright when they are answered in the affirmative.

Justification is always an act and never a growth. There is no such thing as being gradually or partially justified. There is always a moment when the soul apprehends Christ as a Saviour, when it is

washed in atoning blood, when it is forgiven and accepted, and when spiritual life, forfeited by the fall, is restored. This moment may be more or less a matter of consciousness; generally speaking it is not simply a matter of consciousness, but of ineffable joy and peace through believing. It is always preceded by awakening, by a conviction of sin more or less deep and distressing, and by repentance more or less protracted, and accompanied by more or less brokenness of heart; and it is always succeeded by a sense of forgiveness and reconciliation, accompanied with less or more spiritual joy. The Spirit of adoption too, whereby we cry, Abba Father, is always imparted, and He continues to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Here we have the strait gate, and the spiritual birth; and all who have passed through it will attest that it is a strait gate, and that it is a spiritual birth, and that there was an ever to be remembered striving to enter through it. Even St. Chrysostom, (on Romans viii. 15,) who cannot be accused of being overcharged with Evangelicalism, in speaking of the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father, says, "And this is the first language we give utterance to after those marvellous throes, and that strange and unusual mode of labour." And there is an unmistakeable resemblance between the conversion of St. Augus-

tine before he was baptized, and those conversions which are daily taking place amongst the baptized wherever the doctrine of justification by faith is preached with simplicity and power. I have therefore often said in the course of this exposition, and I say it again both to Churchmen and Evangelicals, that justification has nothing whatever to do with Baptism, save only, that by Baptism the blessings, powers, and benefits of justification are confirmed and sealed unto the justified by the Christian Sacrament; and that when the baptized child is justified, he has the full advantage of this same efficacious sealing as much as if he had not been baptized until he was justified. Thus the Word of God, the Church, and men of the Evangelical school of every name and denomination, give their testimony to the truth that we are justified by faith, and by faith only. Moreover, we are not only justified by faith, but the just also live by faith. This truth, which was proclaimed by Habakkuk, is twice quoted by St. Paul, so that without living, saving faith, which is God's gift to the repentant sinner, the state of justification can be neither attained nor retained.

Absolutism and Catholicism are opposites, and yet a true Catholic must sometimes be very absolute. In this matter, faithfulness to God and to truth, and an earnest desire for the salvation of deluded

souls, and for the restoration of Christian unity, compel me to be absolute. So deep is my conviction —confirmed by experience in dealing individually with souls during the last thirty-six years—that, under the Gospel, adults must either enter in at the strait gate of justification or perish, (inasmuch as piety, without justification, is as a house built upon a foundation of sand); and so very evident is it to me that our baptized children are not in the state of justification, that any uncertainty in the trumpet's sound, on my part, would bring down on me the burden of blood-guiltiness. Our baptized children have neither living faith, the witness of the Spirit, nor any indication of their having been restored to spiritual life; in short, the whole of the distinctive characteristics of the state of justification are wanting; and we only deceive ourselves, and trifle with vital truth, and their most precious souls, when we imagine that they may be *unconsciously* in that state of grace which is peculiarly distinguished from all other states by the *conscious* realization and enjoyment of its powers and blessedness.

Having so strongly and distinctly expressed my convictions on this important subject, I am the more free in mind and heart to consider the nature of the state of grace and salvation into which our children are brought when they are baptized; and I must say at once, that if our minds had not been

perverted by the absolute dogmatism of our wretched systems, we never should have thought of regarding the state of our baptized infants as anything more than purely provisional and in accordance with their actual condition of unconsciousness and irresponsibility. It is very strange that men of intelligence, and possessing some measure of spiritual enlightenment, should ever have been led to suppose either that God would dispense with the laws, and deviate from the principles of His remedial economy, because we must be children before we become men; or on the other hand that because children are children, and not men, He has made no provision at all either for their salvation or spiritual education. Most of our errors originate in our misconceptions of the moral character of God; and while our dogmas have unquestionably been constructed on God's truth, and, in a certain sense, give expression to that truth, they have as unquestionably been constructed without that regard to His moral character which would have corrected their absolutism.

Now, the general law and righteous principles of God's remedial economy may be thus briefly stated. Christ, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man. "By His one oblation of Himself, once offered, He hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." He can, therefore, remove the

curse of the broken law, and forgive sins as He pleaseth; but His pleasure is always subject to His righteousness. Now, it is the law of the Everlasting Covenant of Redemption, entered into between God and His eternal Son before the worlds were, and by virtue of which all mercy and grace are extended to us, that repentance and faith shall be the conditions of our justification. The law and the conditions are not arbitrarily imposed, but unalterably fixed because they are righteous. Indeed, no other conditions are conceivable which could meet all the facts, relative positions, and requirements which are involved. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; He hath purchased it with His own blood, and it is therefore most righteously His own free and unmerited gift. Anything which would rob Him of His own peculiar and exclusive glory as our alone Redeemer would be unjust; and anything calculated to lessen the eternal obligation to gratitude on the part of the saved towards their Saviour would be a wrong committed against both. It is also a righteous thing that the sinner should come to Christ for salvation as a humble suppliant, conscious alike of his guilt, of his helplessness, and of his need,—this is repentance. And it is certainly a very righteous thing that he should come to Him, not questioning His truthfulness or doubting His love, but with a grateful and confiding heart, blessing

and praising Him in the very depths of his soul for His unspeakable mercy in dying in his stead, and in thus making an atonement for his sins,—this is faith. And if we take into consideration the Spirit's action upon the sinner to lead him to repentance, and to enable him to exercise a saving faith, we see that all is so complete in mercy, and perfect in righteousness, that any exception to, or deviation from, the law and principles of such an economy, must have righteousness for its plea, and bear on its face its provisional and temporary character. Let us suppose that the case of the heathen is exceptional. If this really be so, and we hope it is so, then the upright among the heathen will be dealt with according to some such law as seems to be indicated by St. Peter, when he says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Still the grace, which for aught we know is extended to the heathen, must be very different, both in kind and degree, to that which is given to the Christian. In a case which is purely provisional, such as that of our baptized children, the deviation from the general principles of God's remedial economy can only be temporary, continuing only so long as the baptized child is in the state of nonage and irresponsibility. What most righteously may be done for

the child, seeing it is incapable of faith, cannot righteously be extended onwards to the adult, and exempt him from the general law of God's remedial economy; because, when the child becomes an adult there is no longer a righteous necessity for deviating from its principles; for, as we have already said, they are righteously, though not arbitrarily, unalterable. The principles of God's remedial economy commend themselves so entirely to my mind, heart, and soul, that I see it to be unrighteous and unholy to desire any other entrance into the state of justification than that which has been so wondrously devised; and, therefore, I can have no sympathy with those who seek to avoid the strait gate which leadeth unto life, by alleging that they passed through it unconsciously when they were baptized. But this perversity of our fallen nature, which, in accordance with its inherited meanness and dishonesty, is always trying to rob God both of His honour and of His righteousness, must not lead us to imagine that because His merciful provisions are thus presumed upon and abused, that therefore they do not exist, for, beyond all doubt, there is a provisional economy for our baptized children; and it is equally certain that it is merely and only provisional. And this consideration leads me to observe, that the grace of God is both given in different degrees, and that there are

also many different kinds of grace; for, in very truth, everything but sin is of grace. I need only say, at present, that both the gift of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are by measure according to the preparedness of the recipient. There must ever be fulness of forgiveness at the time of reconciliation, else there can be no reconciliation at all; but as to the measure of grace in the case of our baptized infants it is doubtless suitably and righteously proportioned to their needs and capacities, in accordance with the purposes of the provisional economy which God has most graciously devised for them. Beyond all question, as I shall immediately proceed to shew, they are forgiven and accepted. It is equally certain that they have not the distinguishing characteristics of the state of justification. At the same time they have been sacramentally initiated into the Christian Covenant, and have come under its holy and most self-denying conditions; they are destined, if faithful to their obligations, to attain to that spiritual exaltation which it contemplates—even a re-creation, or regeneration after the image, and in the very nature of Christ, preparatory to a perfect and eternal union with Him.

This provisional state of the baptized infant has nothing singular or unusual about it, for we have numerous instances of the operation of the same provisional principle in the history of God's dealings

with His people. In fact, we see it in progressive development throughout all the dispensations, from Adam to Christ. Even during our Lord's ministry there was evidently a special provisional dispensation to serve for the time being. There was first a specially appointed and temporary Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins under the ministry of St. John the Baptist, which however was connected with the revelation of very little light or grace in advance of that enjoyed in the dispensation which was being superseded. And then the sick, the halt, the blind, the possessed, were brought, or came to Christ for bodily cures, and He forgave them their sins before or after He had healed their diseases; but who will say that they were therefore placed in the state of justification? It is not even easy to comprehend or define the actual spiritual condition of our Lord's disciples during His ministry; yet, not merely the Gospel, but the whole system of Christian truth, was committed to them before they were sufficiently enlightened to understand the one, or had sufficient grace to obey the other; and they received their ministerial and apostolical commission before they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and therefore before they were qualified for their high apostolic office. Doubtless their long ten days' travail of soul, while anxiously waiting the fulfilment of a promise, the true nature of

which they could not rightly understand, was to them a very strait gate, through which it was difficult to struggle; and may we not believe that this was their fitting preparation for the reception of Pentecostal gifts and blessings?

It is only in the light of the same provisional principle of the Divine government, that we shall be able fully to understand the real spiritual condition of our baptized infants; who are brought to Christ and are pardoned; and who have also a measure of the Spirit's leadings, preventings, and influence suitable to their provisional state, that the preparatory work for their regeneration may be successfully carried on; while yet the strait gate of justification is still before them, through which they must pass before Christ can be formed in them, or the life of Christ be manifested by them. I am thankful to say that this provisional principle is acted upon by the Church, and fully recognized in her teaching; so fully indeed, that objections have been taken against the alleged inconsistency of demanding repentance and faith as requirements for Baptism, and then proceeding to baptize upon a promise given by proxy, without consent of the party who is actually baptized. Now it is very true that the promise is made by sureties or sponsors for an unconscious infant, and the rationalistic mind will ever account it foolishness; but "the

foolishness of God is wiser than men;" for although God's covenants with men are always God's gifts to men, yet the very nature of a covenant demands that the covenanting parties should be represented. It is also true, that unless the promise be fulfilled, the work of regeneration, which is the object of the Covenant, cannot even be commenced, although in infancy, before it can be fulfilled, certain preparations for its commencement, by religious training and discipline, may and ought to be made. The fact that sureties are required is an unmistakeable manifestation of the Church's teaching. It shews that Baptism is a Covenant as well as a Sacrament; that the Covenant itself is conditional; and as regards the infant, evidently provisional. At the same time it must be remembered that neither sponsors, nor repentance, nor faith are the grounds of the validity of Baptism. Baptism is valid because it is the ordinance of God. To be baptized in the name of the Trinity implies God's presence, God's authority, and adoption into God's family; yea, a planting into the death and life of Christ. The word and the water receive their efficacy first of all from God, but they become efficacious in us just as we comply with the conditions which He has annexed. There ought to be faith on the part of the minister, and there ought to be faith on the part of the sponsors; but I say again, it is not the

work of faith to make Baptism valid; is is the work of faith to apprehend what is done by Baptism, and to appropriate the free gifts of God which are therein given to be used; for they are of such a nature that they can only be realized as they are used. No man will deny that Christ has died for sinners; but of what use is Christ's death to the sinner unless He is by the sinner apprehended as a Saviour? O that men could be brought to see that this is precisely the case with regard to Baptism! We are actually baptized into Christ, we are actually planted in the likeness of His death and resurrection by Baptism; but of what advantage is this to us, if we do not by faith apprehend the truth and act upon it? To believe it mentally will do nothing for us; to apprehend it by faith gives us the power to become conformable both to His death and resurrection, in living, self-subduing, soul-transforming power. But, alas, the Churchman, because he has not living faith, can only have the carnal conception of a deposit which remains; and the Evangelical, whose highest aim is to be saved, and consequently whose whole being and religion is permeated with selfishness, can see nothing in Baptism beyond a religious rite. When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? The Churchman says, 'I do not feel it, but I hope I have it;' and the Evangelical says, 'I will not

believe it unless I feel it.' Between the two, alas, where or what is faith? Nevertheless, God is true. In all His dealings with His people there is nothing that is arbitrary, there is nothing that is empty; for Christ filleth all things, and is the very fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and there is nothing in the shape, or after the nature of charms, or of deposits, according to the Romish conceit of an *opus operatum*. Priestcraft, rationalism, and absolutism are alike repugnant to His wisdom and His righteousness. All is real on His part, and all must be of faith on ours, and whatsoever is not of faith hath the nature of sin.

The only portion of Scripture which the Prayer Book brings forward in the office for the ministration of Baptism to infants is the tenth chapter of the Gospel by St. Mark, at the thirteenth verse, where the fact is stated that Christ not only took the young children in His arms who were brought to Him, put His hands upon them and blessed them, but that He also made the important declaration, "Of such is the kingdom of God." This ought to have settled the matter at once and for ever as to there being a state of salvation, grace, and blessedness for the unconscious children who are brought unto Him, although they are incapable of possessing or exercising faith. It was right to bring them, it was wrong to forbid them; but we have at present

only to do with the simple facts, that they were brought to Christ, that He graciously received them, and that He embraced them in His arms and blessed them. Thus we see that faith in the recipient, when there is no capacity for it, is not an essential condition for the reception of a certain measure of grace and forgiveness. Beyond all question the children were forgiven, for they could not possibly be at once under the curse of the broken law and under the blessing of Christ. Still I suppose nobody who knows anything about justification will allege that the children were justified as well as forgiven. In their case there were no struggles to enter into the strait gate after the manner of Jacob's wrestling, there were no birth pangs, no "marvellous throes, no strange and unusual mode of travail," and consequently there was no new birth, no Spirit of adoption, although there was forgiveness and acceptance. The Prayer Book has therefore taken the most effectual way of justifying both the Church's act and teaching; for the portion of Scripture selected is in itself the most satisfactory evidence that there is for our unconscious infants when they are brought to Christ a state of salvation from the curse of the broken law and from the wrath of God.

When our Saviour says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," does He indicate the Church on

earth, or the Church in heaven? Or does He mean both? I believe He means more than both. There is but one Church; and yet, however paradoxical it may sound, there are three Churches. There is the outward and visible Church, which ought to consist of faithful men, though unfortunately it does not. Then there is the invisible Church, which only consists of those who are livingly united in Christ, and who have Christ in them; for the union is twofold, even as the branch is in the vine, and the sap or life of the vine is in the branch. And then there is the Church in heaven. Thus there are three Churches, and yet they are but one Church. For the visible is but an instrumental means, and is therefore called a mother—instituted by Christ for the production, nurture, and perfecting of the invisible. The invisible, on the other hand, is final in its spiritual character, and is preparing for, and progressing towards, that fuller state of blessedness enjoyed by the Church in heaven. Thus, while the unity of the three should not be overlooked, it is of great importance that we should grasp the distinction between each. In considering our Lord's words, let us apply them first to the Church in heaven. The Prayer Book says, "It is certain from God's word, that children which are baptized dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly

saved." You perceive the Church believes in what she does, and means what she says. She believes that children who are brought to Christ in His ordinance are blessed—that the water to them is atoning, cleansing blood; and therefore she speaks with confidence as to the state of these little ones, who were brought to Him in Baptism, and are subsequently in their innocency called to Him by death. And if any man objects to the Church's confidential language in such a matter, either because of his rationalism or his absolutism, the Church does not recognize the authority or respect the opinions of any such masters, for she is under the obedience of faith.

The invisible Church, in common with the Church in heaven, as being most like it and nearest to it, is called for the most part in Scripture "*the kingdom of God.*" At the same time, to each of the three the name of "the kingdom of heaven" is occasionally applied, though this last term belongs generally to the visible Church, considered as the means ordained by God for gathering souls out of the world, and preparing them for heaven. This latter term is only to be found in St. Matthew, who treats even of the visible Church as a kingdom. Now with regard to the invisible Church I have very much to say which I shall not say at present, and which it is not necessary to say in an exposition

of this kind. But the enlightened students of God's Word will easily discover that the qualifications for membership of the invisible Church differ widely from those which entitle the adult to admission into the visible Church by Baptism. So far from its being true that the invisible Church consists of all the justified or converted throughout the world, we shall find that whenever the inward Church is alluded to, not only conversion, but something more than this is ever spoken of as the condition of entrance into it. Just as we must leave all, deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow Christ before we can become disciples of Christ, so must we, by God's help, use the grace of justification, which is given us at conversion, to crush the proud independence of our natural spirit, and thus become truly "as little children" before we can enter within this inner circle of living and unbroken union with Christ. Such is the union typified by the figure of the vine and the branches, which holds so prominent a position in that last discourse of our Lord's, in which He completes His teaching by revealing the deepest mysteries of the Christian life, and dwells particularly upon His union with His faithful followers, which He tells us is perfect of its kind, and similar in its nature to His union with the Father.

Those who do not see their high calling may

blind their eyes to the meaning of such words as these, "I in them, and thou in me, that the love wherewith thou hast loved them may be in them and I in them;" but there they stand, and they who are not only called to be saints, but who are saints indeed, can "set to their seal that God is true," and that the prayer of Christ has not been offered up in vain. To them it is given to understand what is the difference between being born of the Spirit and being begotten of God and born of God. Justification comes to us through repentance and faith, which are required as conditions of admission into the visible Church; but we must not only be converted, but also become as little children before we can be really united to Christ in such a way as that it may with truth be said that He dwelleth in us and we in Him. The mystics tell us, and tell us truly, that in conversion the Holy Spirit's help and influence are with us and for us—that it is by Him only that we repent and believe; yet, as by the conscious act of the first Adam, man forfeited the spiritual life, so is it by a conscious act on our part that this life is restored, for in truth we are justified *by faith*. But in regeneration a new creation takes place. The new element, which the first Adam did not possess, even the Divine nature, (which was prefigured by the Tree of Life in the

midst of Paradise), is begotten within us, and begins to be progressively developed. We are not in one sense born again, but rather Christ is born in us and is gradually formed in us as the old Adam dies. He grows continually, and waxes strong within us, and increases in wisdom, in stature, in favour, "till we come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Now in this birth, on the other hand, we ourselves cannot hold the position of efficient causes; it is entirely the work of God's all-creating power, and the preparation for it is to become childlike, utterly to renounce self, and to depend upon God. The transition into this higher phase of Christian experience commences with an inward hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a longing after inward holiness and purity, which God will take care to satisfy; and this will be accompanied with a sense of deadness to earthly things, for we shall have embraced the cross by which the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. If this great reality, which is witnessed to very remarkably by the Mystics, and indeed by the Fathers and the truly spiritual in every age, had been described in Scriptural language, which is the language of the Church, an intelligible exposition of practical regeneration would have been offered which the truly spiritual mind could hardly have refused to receive, whereas

unhappily it has been too often prejudiced by ambiguous expressions and scholastic jargon.

It has indeed been alleged that the passage in St. Matthew (xviii. 3) already alluded to, simply implies that when we are converted we of necessity become as little children. But in the first place this would not be true, for merely converted persons are generally anything but little children. And on the other hand the passage, without any undue violence, admits of another interpretation, which tallies more closely with an important cognate passage—that, namely, which occurs in the description of our Lord blessing the children.

The words preserved both by St. Matthew and St. Mark, are still more pointedly repeated by St. Luke (*Vide* Matt. xix., Mark x), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." When therefore our Lord asserted, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," He not only meant us to infer that the children who were blessed were in a state of salvation, but that we must become *childlike* before we can become the living members of His body, or be admitted into His invisible Church or Kingdom.

But had the words no reference in our Saviour's mind to the visible Church or Kingdom? And are we not warranted in applying them to the out-

ward Church? When He gave the commission for the baptism of all nations, did He not look forward through the course of the eighteen centuries that have since elapsed, and foresee what has actually taken place? Is it possible to conceive that at such a time the thought had escaped His mind that the children of His covenanted people must be provided for. Was not the very bringing the children to Him a touching appeal for such a provision? And did He not foresee that the children must and would become the future generation of His Church, after the analogy of the old Theocracy, which was at that moment passing away while He was setting up another in its stead? I have said very much about the necessity of repentance and faith as the conditions of the administration of Baptism to adults. I have pointed out that such conditions are essential, both as being in accordance with apostolic usage, and with the righteous principles of God's remedial economy, but I have now to place before you a correlative line of thought, to which the commission given to the Apostles to baptize all nations, is the key. I cannot believe that Christianity was ever designed to be limited to individuals. There is in Christianity, as well as in the Church, that which is external as well as that which is internal; and while the former cannot regenerate society, t nevertheless humanizes and civilizes it.

Christ is the Light of the world as well as the Life of the regenerate; and national religion which is developed in the successive generations of baptized children is too valuable a preparation for our high calling not to have been foreseen and provided for. The theory of development, though a dangerous one, either when applied to doctrines or to institutions, contains nevertheless a great truth. At the beginning individual converts necessarily constituted the Church; but it is ridiculous to allege that the Church, after having been peopled for nineteen centuries by successive generations of baptized children, should again be reduced to its original elements. The very fact that the Apostles were commissioned to baptize *all nations* implies that the Church would be both national and universal. They are not directed to baptize believers amongst the various nations, but emphatically *all nations;* and I cannot see by what means nations could have been admitted into the New Covenant, consistently with the laws of God's remedial economy, which requires repentance and faith from adults as the condition of Baptism, if Baptism had been denied to the generations of children descending from the families of believers. Most certainly in every age and in every country, true believers who could claim Baptism on the ground of their having experienced

justification have never constituted anything but a very small fraction of society. Doubtless the Christian Church, as to its constitution, was intended to be—what it has ever been, and what it now is—a spiritual Theocracy, under the headship of Christ, succeeding the old Jewish Theocracy. While the old was passing away the new unobserved was growing up in its place. Baptism, by Divine ordinance, superseded Circumcision, and the Supper of the Lord the Pascal Feast. In short, the old Theocracy was a preparation for and a type of the new, and it has ever been so regarded; and the more carefully we look into the type the more clearly shall we discern the antitype, and thus the more fully comprehend its nature and object.

The prophetic description given by our Lord of the visible Church, the kingdom of heaven, fully justifies this statement. The net enclosing good and bad fishes, the wheat and tares growing together, and the wise and foolish virgins forming originally one company, all clearly indicate what would be—history tells us what has been—the character of the outward Church; yet ought the admission to Church privileges to be even now as carefully guarded as in the days of the Apostles, when the Church was made up of individual converts. But even the peculiar restrictions on the admission to Church privileges did not then, nor

would they now, if revived, preserve the Church from the admixture of evil.

It is very obvious that our children ought to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and this implies that they are in a certain state of grace, else they could not be so brought up. The very exhortation, "Children obey your parents in the Lord," could not have been correctly addressed to them, had there been any truth in the cruel supposition, that until they are converted they are under the domination of the Evil One. It is only in the light of this consideration that our Lord's teaching can fully be explained. The lost sheep had been in the fold and had wandered from it; the piece of silver was in the woman's possession before it was lost; and the prodigal son had been an inmate of His father's home ere he started on his wanderings. Those who were called to the wedding feast had previously been bidden, and were expected to attend as the friends of the bridegroom, and not as strangers, far less as enemies; for such we ask not to our weddings! The unjust steward was actually a steward; the unmerciful servant was as truly a servant, and high in office, too,—and after having been first condemned and then forgiven, he sins yet again; and the servants to whom the talents and the pounds were entrusted were in each case members of the household. Even

the figure of the wide and strait gate seems to imply that those to whom the exhortation is addressed are in a certain state of grace. Both gates are represented as standing before them, neither having been as yet entered. Hence the propriety of the warning which calls us back from entering the wide gate and the broad road which lead to destruction, and of the exhortation, "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life;" and this life, to which the strait gate of conversion and the narrow road of self-denial lead, is none other than the life of Christ, (prefigured once by the Tree of Life,) the great promise made from the beginning but reserved for us. Truly our baptized ones need the exhortation, for few there be that find the gate, and fewer still who walk in the narrow way. Now why, I would ask, have we this kind of teaching if our children are not admitted into Covenant, and are not under a provisional economy of grace suited to their state?

The Prayer Book begins the baptismal office by declaring that is necessary that our children, who are conceived and born in sin, should be brought into a state of grace and salvation; and therefore all present are entreated to "call upon God, that of His bounteous mercy the child may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into

Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same." Now, if we shrink from being absolute, and suffer ourselves to believe that the Spirit is given in various measures, that "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," and "differences of administrations, but the same Lord;" and "diversities of operations," while the same God "worketh all in all," there is nothing in this prayer for the child to startle or perplex any spiritual mind. Much is prayed for in reference to the future of the child, here and in other parts of the office, and we must neither imagine nor expect that *all* that is asked for will be *immediately* given. The child must be washed in atoning blood, else there can be no forgiveness; and there must also be a bestowal of a measure of the Spirit, otherwise there would be no preventing grace, or capacity for religious nurture; and doubtless too the baptized child is received into the visible Church, in its own character, as a child of the Covenant preparing for Covenant privileges. Then, by way of explaining the nature and object of the Covenant, we have first Noah, the type of regeneration; and I must observe that this is in strict accordance with God's own teaching, for Noah comes before Abraham; and similarly we have in the case of infants regeneration by Sacrament and Covenant, though the actual process be not as yet developed before justi-

fication by faith of which Abraham is the type. After Noah we have the Red Sea, and after the Red Sea, the Jordan. We must see that all this is in perfect order, if it be given us to understand the typical teaching. The type of Noah is not done away with after circumcision is given; it still abides in all its fulness, else St. Peter would not have adduced it in connexion with resurrection power; but when God laid in a family the foundation of a nation which should be consecrated to Himself for His own purposes, He gave the Covenant of Circumcision to Abraham and his seed, even as Christ, for a like reason, gave unto us the Covenant of Regeneration. The circumcised were taken down into Egypt, even as our baptized ones are brought into a state of bondage under the elements of this world. In Egypt there was much slavish labour and discipline; and if our children are religiously educated, the labour and discipline will be analogous to that of Egypt. There is in fact no antitype to the circummcised Israelites in Egypt, but that of our baptized and unconverted children, and too often they are placed under kings who know not Joseph. But there comes a time of deliverance in God's appointed way, and whether conversions be of a more protracted character or more immediate, there must ever be the passage of the Red Sea, where deliverance is wrought, by that

which typifies the atoning and cleansing blood of Christ. Through this the baptized child, when it becomes responsible, must of necessity pass; and when the Red Sea has been crossed there will not be wanting the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, typical of the Holy Spirit. The Egyptians,—types of the enthralling powers of sin, will lie drowned on the shore, and the song of triumph will be raised, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea." This is conversion, which brings not only freedom from bondage and cleansing from sin, but in which also the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit is bestowed for our guidance and comfort. Yet previous to this blood had been shed when the child was circumcised, and by virtue of that rite the child was made an Israelite—a subject of the Theocracy, and as such had been brought nigh unto God and placed under blessing; the circumcised Israelite was no Egyptian, although he was under the bondage of Egypt. In like manner the baptized child is removed from under the curse of the broken law and the wrath of God; he is not a heathen, but a Christian under blessing and brought nigh unto God, although the Red Sea has yet to be passed, and the fulness of the powers and blessings of the state of justification are yet to be attained.

Baptism symbolizes the all of Christianity, but the actual realization of what it symbolizes is a matter of progress. The circumcised family is driven down into Egypt because there is a famine in the land of Canaan, and they are there detained and disciplined under taskmasters, because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Now if we take the land of Canaan to be, what it most certainly is, a type of the heart, where the kingdom of heaven is set up within us, preparatory to our being translated into the kingdom of heaven above, then all the types at once fall into a natural and intelligible order and sequence. The provisional state of grace and salvation, into which the baptized child is brought, is not a state in which we are to rest. "The heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father; and is in bondage under the elements of the world until he is redeemed from that state of bondage, that he may receive the adoption of sons." The Amorite, which means the self-willed rebellious spirit, soon begins to shew itself in the young child, and developes itself more and more until the Spirit convinces of sin. Then commences the struggle for freedom between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. The sins of our corrupt nature are

plagued, and the baptized child is helped, and finally delivered by the Red Sea. That part of the Baptismal Covenant which is symbolized by the washing with blood and the cleansing by the Spirit is then fully realized, and the prayer for a Pentecostal baptism is also answered. But let it be remembered that the child from its sacramental Baptism, like the circumcised Israelite, is a child of God, an adopted child of the new spiritual Theocratic Kingdom, under the Headship of Christ, and is in the enjoyment of Christ's blessing, in accordance with His provisional economy for the children of the Covenant.

It is impossible for me to doubt, after all I have seen and known of converted men, that the state of justification is truly typified by the journeyings of the Children of Israel through the wilderness. This is not the place for expounding the type and tracing out the analogy, which if I am spared I purpose to do in another work; but who that knows anything of a converted man's experience can have any difficulty in recognizing the triumphal and joyous song of deliverance; the bitter waters of Marah, when relatives and friends oppose and persecute instead of rejoicing with us; the twelve sweet wells of Elim and the seventy palm trees, when we are recognized as brethren, and rejoiced over by the children of God; the temptation to murmur;

the assault of Amalek; the sanctification which precedes the discernment of the holiness of the gospel law of love; the apprehension of the nature of holy worship; and the resistance of the natural spirit, when the command is given, 'Go up and possess the promised land.' There are also those who die in the wilderness and those who *perish* in the wilderness; those who backslide and are restored by the brazen serpent, and those who die of their wounds; and there are two tribes and a half who choose for their portion the wilderness side of the Jordan. There is no mistaking such experiences as these, which day by day we see exemplified in the lives of the converted: they are just as comprehensible to those who can see, as is the state of the unconverted but baptized Christian in the bondage of Egypt. But it is only with the Jordan that we have now to do, which is brought before us in the office for Baptism as a further development of the glorious realities symbolized by Baptism beyond those which are realized at the passage of the Red Sea. There is another sanctification which takes place before we can pass the Jordan. And I may say at once, that although sanctification is a matter of gradual progress, which should be going on throughout our whole pilgrimage, yet there are successive and special acts of sanctification, such as that before the giving of the

Law, and this previous to the passing of the Jordan, which the earnest-minded are sure to be conscious of, if their prayer for cleansing be fervent and persevering. Hence some of our nonconforming brethren are theoretically wrong in their Theology, and practically wrong in their experience, when they regard an *act* of sanctification as the highest Christian attainment; for cleansing is neither growth nor progress, but only a help towards growth and a preparation for progress. It is very difficult to keep from digression in giving an exposition of this kind, for at every step we meet with errors, misconceptions, and misbeliefs, which it would hardly be right to pass by without some notice. Jordan, which is our subject, means the river of judgment, and it is the place where the world is judged. "Now," saith our Lord, "is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." In the same element of water, by which Christ was consecrated for His office, are we also consecrated as the soldiers of Christ. When we are buried by Baptism into Christ's death we are buried to the world and the world is buried to us, we pass into a new world, even into the "kingdom of God," which is within us. Here begins the interior life which the fathers and the spiritualists have written so much about, and here the true membership of the invisible Church com-

mences. The twelve stones which Joshua set up in the midst of the Jordan in the place where the feet of the priests which bore the Ark of the Covenant stood, and which are there to this day, and the twelve stones which were taken out of the Jordan where the feet of the priests stood firm, which were pitched in Gilgal, are the twelve foundations of the Apostles upon which the Church is built, and upon which we are to be builded. Now, and only now, begins the work of self-conquest. Now the circumcision or baptismal burying becomes a real circumcision, and Christ appears to us as a man with His sword drawn —even "as the Captain of the host of the Lord does He come," to lead us onward in His own strength and likeness, conquering and to conquer. Jericho, the light of the moon, gives place to Christ, who becomes our Sun of Righteousness. It is no longer the letter or the mental teaching of the Church, but Christ the light of life. After the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold,—the remnants of the world in the Church—are finally discarded. Ai, which seems to be but a small city, but which is in reality heaps of worldly association—for so its name imports—is utterly destroyed by fire. Jebus, the great treader-under-foot, who walks in state—for such is the meaning of the word—the ruling principle, self-will, *or self*, is at length subdued and converted into Jerusalem, the vision or possession

of peace, the city and dwelling-place of the Great King, where the temple is built, and where the Shechinah—the glorious presence of the Lord—is revealed.

There is no need of filling up the outline. They who know anything of the interior life will have no difficulty in doing so, and no exposition which could be given will enlarge the views or alter the opinions of those who refuse to go up to possess the land, or who choose for themselves a portion on the world's side of the Jordan. It is my work to justify the teaching of the Prayer Book, and I think you will see that the Church has followed the order of God in bringing before us, first Noah, as a general type of the regeneration, and then the Red Sea, as the realized symbol of the mystical washing which takes place at our justification, and then the Jordan, where we are crucified with Christ and the world is crucified to us, even as the wilderness was left by the Israelites, and where we rise with Christ in the power of His Resurrection, and go forth in His strength, conquering and to conquer all our spiritual enemies until we become in very deed the living temples of the living God.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER VI.

The Teaching of the Sacraments.

My dear Sir,

I consider my last letter the most important of the series; and if the exposition which I have given of God's provisional economy for our baptized children be accepted, it will, by God's blessing, put an end to our contentions and doctrinal differences within the Church, and pave the way for the restoration of Christian unity. Our absolute systems which have the doctrine of justification for their foundation, life, and central truth, and salvation for their highest end, can only be brought down into their proper place by the exhibition and reception of the light of Christianity. The saving realization of this great truth is, as I have said, the necessary preparation for Christianity, but it is a very poor substitute for it; and I am sorry to say that such a substitution is not an imaginary evil, but a reality of portentous magnitude. Happily many men are better than their systems; but I am bound to say, that whenever the doctrine of justification by faith virtually takes the place of the Christian sacraments, which it has a tendency to do under all evangelical systems, then Christianity

is ignored, its foundations are virtually renounced. The principles and precepts which are proper to Christianity, will be found in such cases to be so lowered in their application as to adapt themselves to an indifferent level of practice, in which the law of self-sacrifice is altogether lost sight of. Similarly the high object of our calling, even our regeneration after the nature and image of Christ is not discerned, and its conditions of denying self, leaving all, taking up our cross daily and following Christ, are either so modified that their true meaning and object are not apprehended, or are altogether repudiated as unnecessary. Now until the real nature and high objects of the Christian Church, as an universal spiritual Theocracy under the Headship of Christ, are clearly understood—until the Baptismal Covenant or Covenant of Regeneration is seen to be provisional, conditional and progressive, that is to say, provisional as regards infants, conditional in the case of adults, and progressive in respect to the true Christian who is advancing in the regenerate life—and until it is admitted that the elements of bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper communicate more and more of the nature and life of Christ, according to the communicant's fitness of recipiency, there can be no restoration of Christian unity, for an unity on the principle of ignoring Christianity would not be a Christian

unity at all. The foundations of the Christian life may be misconceived or obscured by being mixed up and confounded with other principles, but God will never suffer them to be overturned. He will preserve them and have them witnessed for, as is the case in the Prayer Book, despite all our mutual oppositions, and however much they may be virtually repudiated or practically dishonored.

I have taken a great deal of pains to give such an exposition of the Baptismal Covenant as the intelligent spiritual mind may, with some little thoughtfulness, easily understand; and I should hope that those who have thoroughly mastered the exposition, which by God's help I have been enabled to give, will just have as little scruple in saying that the baptized child is regenerate, as in admitting that the circumcised child became by virtue of that rite a child of God; for most certainly the one fact is just as undeniable as the other. The doctrines of Scripture neither contradict nor ignore each other; therefore Baptism does not ignore the strait gate, and the strait gate does not ignore Baptism. Neither do the doctrines of Scripture give the lie to palpable facts; and it is an undeniable fact that our baptized children do not exhibit the characteristics of the state of justification. Neither can facts contradict the teaching of Scripture; and we are assured by Scripture that our children, who are

brought unto Christ in His own ordinance of Baptism, are blessed and regenerated, inasmuch as they are admitted into the Covenant of Regeneration, and have become the adopted children of the Theocratic Spiritual Kingdom under the Headship of Christ. I am not going to talk about commandments, for grace and faith are the greater things which we have to do. We have all great reason to thank God that we are not under the law of commandments. Christ is as truly present now in His word and ordinances as when He was upon earth, and works efficaciously in, through, and by them, in accordance with His own law of righteousness. This is enough for me, and it ought to be enough for all who have any measure of true faith. And yet the Church, in all her fulness of faith and most loving confidence, is in no wise wanting in true motherly modesty. Her language is, "Wherefore we, being persuaded of the good will of our Heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by His Son Jesus Christ; and nothing doubting but that He favorably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing this infant to His Holy Baptism." Which is most in accordance with the mind and spirit of Christ, they that forbid, or she that believes and brings? I thank God that, instead of a direct command to baptize believers and infants, we have the general commission

to baptize all nations. I also thank Him that we have no act or word of the Apostles recorded which could lead us to infer that the infants of believing households were not baptized, because it proves to us that although justification ought ever to precede admission to Church privileges, yet it is the mind and purpose of God that Christianity should be in harmony with the natural foundations of family and national life. I have no sympathy with the divisive principles of separatism, or with the rationalistic theory of the late Lord Macaulay. The cultivation and propagation of Christianity is the first duty, and ought to be the chief and highest object, of the family and of the nation which are professedly Christian, so that Christianity should come to us both by descent and by the realizing power of faith. This was the principle upon which God acted when He constituted the old exclusive Jewish Theocracy, and this most evidently is the principle which Christ acted upon when He instituted the Christian Church, which is the only universal kingdom that ever existed. And again, I thank God that Christ has said nothing about infant Baptism. We see that Churchmen in all ages, as at the present time, have had a tendency to believe that a certain deposit of grace is made at Baptism, which they may stir up and begin to act upon at any period of their after life; which delusion has introduced the gradual

amendment system and ignored the strait gate; and the consequence has been and is the propagation, under delusion, of spiritual death. As it is, there is nothing more difficult than to undeceive the deceived, or to awaken those from the sleep of spiritual death who think themselves to be already alive. If anything had been said by our Lord to countenance this delusion, (and a direct command to baptize our infants could hardly have been given without the semblance of doing so,) the conversion of unconverted Churchmen would have been rendered almost an impossibility; and if any one should say, "Why was there not both a command and an exposition?" then I have to answer, that Christ revealeth truth, and does not elaborately expound it. There has been much of controversy about the meaning of truth, and there would have been more about the meaning of expositions; Baptism would still have been either too much or too little accounted of; and therefore Christ has given to His followers the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of faith, and the Spirit of love, that they may discern His will in His word and example, and lovingly obey it.

The Evangelical may tell us that the sacramental system, as it is called, has long been tried; and what is the result? I confess that the result is exceedingly fearful and distressing. It is a fearful thing

that there should be so much spiritual death in the Church; it is a very distressing thing that there should be so many divisions among professing Christians; and it is an anomalous state of things that the national Church should belie its name, by failing to provide spiritual edification for more than one half of the nation. And is all this owing to the sacramental system? It is very true it may in part be traced to its abuse by one party, and its virtual repudiation by another; but it is a great mistake to attribute all these evils or any part of them to the system itself, for if it were seen in the light of Christ, it would produce now, as at the beginning, true scriptural apostolic piety, that is, Christianity. But, alas! Churchmen expect and allege that they unconsciously receive the grace of justification by means of the sacraments, which is a most sad and fatal delusion; and because Evangelicals see and know it to be so, they virtually repudiate the sacraments; and in doing this, I must solemnly and sorrowfully declare, according to the measure of light which God has given me, that they theoretically, and to a certain extent really, repudiate Christianity. Happily there are many men, as I have already said, who are better than their systems and their creeds; but this does not alter the fact that by their systems and creeds Christianity is repudiated.

The great matter to be decided between the Prayer Book and Nonconformists is not simply the question whether there be such a thing as sacramental grace. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not only the sacraments of the New Covenant, but they are God's witnesses for Christianity, its very foundations and its symbolical expositors. Therefore our conceptions of Christianity necessarily and always rise or fall with our conceptions of the sacraments. If Evangelicals and Nonconformists would rise above their systems, and would endeavour to apprehend the very scriptural truth, that the highest of Christian realities is not Christ for us, or we in Christ, but "CHRIST IN US," the true hope of glory, then all would soon be right, because their measure of spiritual light by God's blessing would soon enable them to discern the true nature and the glorious purpose for which such a self-denying system as Christianity was devised. When we have the right *object* before us, then the means by which this great transformation is wrought, and the conditions upon which this ineffable union with Christ depends, will very easily be comprehended. The object, the means and the conditions are so strikingly homogeneous, that they actually explain one another, and can neither apply nor refer to anything else. If the preconceptions and prejudices engendered and fostered by existing systems were

shaken off like the degrading fetters of the slave, the intelligent spiritual man of a teachable spirit could hardly direct his attention to the sacramental signs or symbols without discerning the nature and high purpose of Christianity. For instance, the burying in water and the rising again out of the water are thus explained by St. Paul, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Now, is there any difficulty in discerning that the burying and the rising indicate the burying of the old man and a resurrection in newness of life? But the Apostle immediately brings forward another figure, namely, a planting which is altogether different from a burying. We are planted, he says, in the likeness of Christ's death, and therefore we are to grow in dying, or die daily.—To what? Christ has very plainly told us to what we are to die. He says, we must die to the world by leaving all and following Him; that we are to die to the flesh by mortifying our members which are upon the earth; and that we are to die unto self by denying self, all its vain and ambitious desires, its own will and way, and every high thing which it loves, and thus feeds and

grows upon. And the Apostle also tells us that we are planted in the likeness of Christ's Resurrection, and therefore we are to grow up in the image and likeness of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. Here we have the self-same things to do which the first figure of burying and resurrection represented as being already done; plainly indicating that the first doing was a sacramental and covenant act, whereby Christ was given to us as an all-sufficient power to be believed in, and by faith to be used, that we might be enabled to die unto self and to live unto God. The two figures so different in themselves, indicate so clearly the distinction between what is done by sacrament and covenant, and what is actually to be done by faith in the power of Christ's Death and Resurrection, that it is only the want of a little thought that prevents its discernment. But, perhaps, some may feel disposed to ask, 'If the great things in the Sacrament be a burying and rising, a planting and a growing, why was not earth used instead of water?' I answer, Because there is *something more* symbolized by Baptism than the burying and rising, and the planting and growing, not of so high a nature it is true, but yet absolutely necessary, and therefore all-important. The guilt of original inherited sin has to be washed away, and this must be done before we can be reconciled to God, or be

fitted for entering into covenant with Him; and therefore water is used as the emblem or symbolic element, which represents atoning blood and the sanctifying Spirit, as well as the burial and resurrection which we have been speaking of.

We have the same analogical and symbolical teaching in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is as easily understood as the baptismal teaching, if we only keep the highest object and purpose of Christianity before us, namely, *the formation of Christ in us*. The Lord's Supper is the antitype of the Passover. The Passover was a typically sacramental festival, instituted by God on the eve of the children of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It consisted of two parts, the sprinkling of the blood of the slain lamb upon the lintels and door-posts, which was the protection of the inmates of the house from the sword of the destroying angel; and the eating of its flesh by the household, equipt as travellers, for their nourishment and strengthening. There are also two parts in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, instituted to commemorate His death. The bread is to be broken, and the wine is to be poured out to symbolize His broken body and shed blood; and we are to eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Him, and to shew forth His death until He come. If no more had been taught us respecting

this most holy Sacrament, we might have been at a loss to understand its deep and full significance. But why is bread chosen as an emblem of His pierced body? There is nothing homogeneously symbolical between the emblem and the thing signified, between the pierced body of Christ and bread. And why are we to eat the bread and to drink the wine if the commemoration of the death of Christ be the only object, or the highest object and purpose of the Sacrament? If we turn to the sixth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, which our Evangelical brethren allege does not refer to the Sacrament, we shall find the only conceivable reason why bread was chosen by our Lord to represent His body, and why we are commanded to eat it? Jesus said unto His disciples, "I am the bread of life which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And again, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh,

and drinketh my blood, *dwelleth in me*, and I IN HIM. *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father:* SO HE THAT EATETH ME, EVEN HE SHALL LIVE BY ME." Can any man read this passage without at once discerning the distinction between the spiritual life which is restored to us by faith, and the life of Christ which is communicated to us through the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Christ. It is by the Spirit that our spiritual life is restored and retained; but here our Lord says expressly, "As I LIVE BY THE FATHER, SO HE THAT EATETH ME, EVEN HE SHALL LIVE BY ME." Let it also be remembered that we are said to be washed in atoning blood, and sprinkled with atoning blood, and that atoning blood speaketh or pleadeth for us; but it is contrary to every type to drink atoning blood. Blood was forbidden to be used *on this very account*. But now under the New Covenant the blood wherein is the life is to be drunk, and so to become Christ's life in us, and the sin-offering is to be eaten that the nature of the Lamb may become our nature. Christ is not only our all-atoning sacrifice, but He is our Covenant and our Life; and therefore He says, This cup *is the New Covenant* in my blood; in receiving the blood we receive Christ our living Covenant, who has life in Himself, and who thus becomes the life of the recipient, who discerns the

Lord's body, and worthily eats His flesh and drinks His blood. The symbolical emblems are now seen to answer perfectly to the thing signified. We eat bread, and the bread is assimilated to our earthly nature by an ordinary physical process; we drink the wine, and the wine becomes assimilated to our blood by a like process; and this is a most fitting symbolical representation of Christ's incorporation with the worthy recipient; for He saith, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I IN HIM." Let it be kept before the mind that the highest object and purpose of Christianity is the perfect union of Christ with the Christian even as Christ is one with the Father, and there will be no more fault found with the language of the Prayer Book, when it says, that "the body and blood of Christ are *verily and indeed* taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

The objection which is raised to the use of the words "Receive ye the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God," is of the same character, and proceeds from the same cause as the objections against the Christian sacraments. It is Christ's incorporation with the Christian, and Christ's presence in His Church which really give offence. Now, if it were true that Christ is not the head of the visible Church as well

as of the invisible, or, in other words, that the visible Church—the antitype of the Jewish Theocracy—is not an universal spiritual Theocracy under Christ's headship, then the words objected against would simply be blasphemous; but because Christ has not withdrawn from the headship of His visible Church, therefore the words are Christ's, and not the Bishop's, who is simply the organ of Christ, by whom He speaks, through the Church, as its head, to whom, as such, all power belongeth, and from whom all power and authority must proceed. The acknowledgment of Christ's headship cannot be blasphemy.

Rationalism is a poor substitute for faith, and in the light of faith it is seen to be most irrational and full of contradictions. "I will never believe," says the Quaker, "that grace can be communicated by a material substance." Now, whether is it easier to believe that by one act of *disobedience*, in eating the forbidden fruit, which was a material substance, sin became so incorporated with human nature that the whole family of man is thoroughly corrupted by it, the noxious foreign element pervading our very life and being, and producing results of depravity, misery, and death, which have made an incipient hell of the fair creation of God; or to believe, that by *obediently* partaking of elements, appointed by God for the very purpose, the

life and nature of Christ are communicated to us? It is true, that in the first case the effect is evidence of the fact; but although the effect in the second case may not always be so apparent, because it has to be gradual, inasmuch as opposing elements have pre-occupation of the heart, does it therefore not take place? Because in the innumerable thousands of unworthy recipients there can be no fruits, and because the worthy recipient may not exhibit the fruits in the veriest perfection, are there therefore, no fruits? And must the Christian sacraments be accounted things of nought, and the whole economy of God for our regeneration be stigmatized as a delusive superstition, because the wisdom of God is the object of our faith, and is beyond the reach of human rationalism? To what fearful lengths does the vain self-opiniated, self-conceited, rationalistic mind lead even religious men, who have both a measure of light and grace!

No man will accuse me, who perhaps have some claim to be accounted the father of living evangelists, and who hope to spend my last days in evangelizing work, of undervaluing evangelizing truth, or of disparaging the grace and state of justification. I have seen too much of conversion work to be deceived as to its true nature, and I have had too long an experience of the state of justification in my own case, as well as in that of thousands,

either to overrate or underrate its powers and blessings; and because this is the case, it is impossible for me to mistake the state of justification for the work of regeneration. It is now more than a quarter of a century since, through God's mercy, I was given to see that justification was not Christianity, but only a preparation for it, and that regeneration is Christianity; that, from first to last, the whole provision for our regeneration, instead of having salvation from the penalties of sin, and restoration to spiritual life for its object, (that being provided for by the grace of justification,) has for its object salvation from self and all the latent powers of sin, and the formation of Christ in us, that we may be completely and eternally united to Him. I see, as clearly as any other truth or fact can be discerned, that to be born of the Spirit belongs to justification. This is a restoration, and not a re-creation. And that to be born of God is a re-creation, with the addition of a new element, even the Divine nature, after the likeness of Christ, which new element Adam in his state of innocence had not. This is the true regeneration for which the self-denying system of Christianity was devised, and from which alone true Christianity, that is, the life of Christ, made manifest in our mortal flesh, can be produced as its legitimate fruit. Hence St. John says, and again and again he reiterates the

declaration, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin;" "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as God is righteous." "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for God's seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Those who confound such a state as this with justification, must either untruthfully exaggerate the experience of the justified, which is too often done, or put a dishonest construction upon the Word of God, which far too many hesitate not to do. So imperfect is the spiritual vision of the simply converted man that he almost always confounds the Spirit with the Spirit's work. But the Holy Spirit does not form Himself in us, although He dwelleth in us and worketh in us. He sheweth unto us the things of Christ, and formeth Christ in us, and not Himself. It is one thing to walk in the Spirit, to live in the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit; it is another thing to have the life and nature of Christ. The truth is, the converted man has still his proud, boastful, self-seeking, self-exalting, natural spirit; he is but a babe, both in grace and in knowledge, and as the Apostle saith, walks, and acts, and thinks too much like the natural man; and the grand mistake is this, he conceives himself to be a man while he is but a child, and therefore unhappily a child he remains to the end of his days. Christ and the

Spirit are two distinct Persons, and have widely different offices; they are even represented by very different emblems, therefore there is no excuse for confounding either their persons or their work, or for mistaking the Dove for the Lamb. Christ in us is not the same as the Spirit in us, although both the Spirit and Christ are God; and to be born of the Spirit is not the same as to be born of God, although God and the Spirit are one. It is a mistake to suppose that Scriptural terms are always used in the same sense, and where there is any uncertainty as to the meaning, we should carefully avoid being mastered by the term, and seek to discover the thing signified. Throughout the Word of God, justification and regeneration are represented, as they ought to be, in combination, and yet the distinction between the saint and the believer is often made and is always easily discernible in the light of Christianity. It is perfectly conceivable that there may be an immortal life of happiness and bliss under the influence and through the indwelling of the Spirit in the eternal world of purity and vision, and perhaps this may be the portion of the justified who have been faithful in the lower state of grace, and who seem to be described as the spirits of just men made perfect, although they do not belong to the "Church of the First-born." We are distinctly told not only that

there are many mansions, and that as "one star differeth from another in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead;" but that there will be a number, which no man can number, of those who "shall sit down" in the kingdom of the Father "with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," and that there will also be a very much smaller company who have suffered with Christ, and who have overcome, even as Christ overcame, who shall sit with Him on His throne. And we are also told that there will be the numerous guests who are called to the wedding supper, as well as the bride of the Lamb. By the exhibition of such truths God is inviting believers to become saints. It is not His will that we should continue to be simply believers, for He has called us to be saints. The two classes have been confounded, just as justification and regeneration have been confounded. St. Paul, in his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, addresses the saints and the faithful in Christ Jesus; and we gain nothing and lose much when we contend that there is no difference between believers and God's holy ones; but in the Word of God no such mistakes are made, and every appellation, even that of a common name, has its distinctive and appropriate meaning. There is certainly a very important distinction between immortality in a state of blessedness, and Eternal Life, which is the life of God, and which

implies all the properties of the Infinite, which are communicable to the finite; and this is the record with which we have to do, and which perfectly accords with the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, "God hath given to us ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath this life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not (this) life."

Although I have fulness of sympathy in the doctrines of grace, and the warmest affections of brotherhood, with and for all who have believed in Christ to the saving of their souls, I cannot regard popular Evangelical systems in any other light than as counterfeits of Christianity. At the same time I most thankfully acknowledge that the good that has been done by Evangelicals and Nonconformists cannot be estimated, because it is beyond estimation; but then it has been the individual, the converted man who has done it in spite of his system; and when I say system, I do not refer to mere external organization, but the radical misconceptions from which all else has sprung. I am also free to confess, as I have done all along, that there is a very fearful amount of spiritual death in the Church, and that even the religious portion of her members are very far from exhibiting the life of Christ, although there are many individual cases in which it is hopefully manifested, and these are

chiefly the hidden ones of Christ who are unknown and yet well known. I have always regarded the Tractarian movement, which has as yet advanced no farther than externalism, as a preparation for the revival of true Christianity: I may never see it, and it may never be. But if spiritual life can be infused into Tractarianism, to a certainty the regenerate life will be developed and manifested along with it. The Tractarian mind cannot rest where it is. There will either be a relapse into former worldliness, which has been the case in too many instances already; or it will expend itself in abortive efforts to popularise a modified Romanism;* while not a few of its adherents will probably become the victims of the delusion, that there is no reality in religion as they have not found any in Tractarianism. Yet it is to be hoped that a goodly remnant will accept the doctrines of grace in their fulness, and become the living witnesses of God for Christianity, and the reality of the regenerate life. It is surely impossible for honest minds to continue under the delusion that our baptized children are little saints, or to persist in denying that there must be somewhere a strait gate and narrow way which leadeth to the regenerate life. Their very honesty forces a certain kind of acknowledgment

* This prediction is at the present moment being singularly and painfully verified.

of truth, although they neither see it clearly nor realize its power, because they are conscious that something more is to be had than what they possess. The following extract from a charge delivered to the clergy of New York long before the Tractarian movement commenced, shows us how light is ever striving to break through the darkness: "When the Churchman, in the language of Scripture, of primitive antiquity, and of the Articles and Liturgy of his Church, calls Baptism regeneration, he does not employ the term, in its popular signification among many Protestants, to denote the Divine influences upon the soul in its sanctification and renovation, in abolishing the body of sin, and raising up the graces and virtues of the new man. The term is used by him in its original and appropriate and technical acceptation to denote the translation of the baptized person from that state in which, as destitute of any covenanted title to salvation, he is styled the child of wrath into that state which, as it proffers to him in all cases the covenanted mercy and grace of God, and in the exercise of repentance and faith actually conveys to him these blessings, is styled a state of salvation. It must be obvious that the *sacramental* commencement of the regenerate life in the Covenant of Baptism, and the subsequent manifestation of the principles, the powers, and affections, of the new

man, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost are distinct acts and operations; the former leading to the latter, which without it is wholly inefficacious; on the contrary increases the condemnation of the despiser of the gifts and calling of God." If we had some such charges as this of the good Bishop Hobart, we might sing with the Evangelical Prophet, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee."

I shall conclude this epistle by accommodating to my purpose the expressive language and valuable counsel of Stier. I feel and bewail as much as any secret or open opponent of baptismal regeneration can do, the lowering and perversion of the Holy Sacrament which we at present witness, with which the desecration of the Lord's Supper is quite parallel. I lament that our baptized children should be nurtured for the world rather than for the Lord, and yet taught to place a groundless reliance upon Baptism. And no less do I deplore the rationalistic undervaluation of this holy ordinance on the part of others—and in short, the general confusion and mutual antagonism into which professing Christians have fallen on these subjects. But all this mischief is not to be imputed to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. It has rather been produced in spite of it by other circumstances which we cannot now stay to set forth. I

must express with assurance my firmest conviction, that the remedy for these evils is not to be found in weakening the foundations of grace and Christianity, upon which through God's mercy our Church still rests, and in the abolition or greater disparagement of the Christian sacraments, which are the appointed channels of Divine grace. This would be still more to confuse and divide and break up communities and peoples, called of God to be Christians, who have the promise of being perfected in one. Luther says, that Ribbeck's allegation, that the reformers did not break away from the notion of the Romish Church in these matters may be changed into a commendation, that they held fast in faith the principle of an ecclesiastical grace of Christ within His Church. We must accommodate our minds to the desecration and crucifixion of the body of Christ—the true Church—by its permanent connection and confusion with the masses of those who have received the grace of Baptism in vain, and are all but hopelessly and finally dead: comforting ourselves with the thought that the coming of our Lord draweth nigh, and the glorious resurrection will not tarry long. Meanwhile let us never forget nor dishonour the patience and long-suffering of the Lord—the sinners' friend and the children's friend, the unweariable grace which begins anew with every new-born child, who

is brought to Him in His own holy ordinance. If Evangelicals would begin diligently to point the baptized to the privileges and obligations of their Baptism, and to take all pains with the fundamental religious education of those who are growing up; if effective evangelizing agencies were to be established which should seek and strive to save those who are grovelling in sin and ignorance; then the original stamp would shine out again distinctively in many who hardly exhibit it at all. Then would it appear far beyond expectation, how much of the germ of regeneration is still present among the children of God, first planted within them by Baptism, to be believed in, and to be used, and only waiting for the exercise of faith, and the action of nurture and discipline to manifest itself in the true characteristics of the regenerate life. This would be infinitely better and more correct, than to blind ourselves, on account of flagrant and general perversion, to the actual grace of Christ's Divine institute.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER VII.

The Church, God's Witness for Christianity.

My dear Sir,

You have of course seen the article in the *Edinburgh Review* on Church Expansion and Liturgical Revision, which has lately been reprinted and circulated among the clergy. I suppose, we may take it for granted, that it very fairly represents the views and wishes of the advocates of revision; and it will be a happy thing for themselves, and augur well for the future peace of the Church, as far as this subject is concerned, if they all possess and exhibit the same spirit of thoughtful moderation which the writer has manifested. Whoever he may be, the article does him very great credit. It is not only very ably written, and is evidently the production of a well-informed and well-balanced mind, but it evinces that deep and sincere regard for truth, which is highly to be commended, and from which in the investigation of truth all that can be desired may be confidently expected. If we had only such minds to deal with, the restoration of Christian unity would very soon be an accomplished fact. He says, "Let it be considered that if there be a question upon which exact agreement between man and man is likely to be im-

possible, that question is the theory of Sacraments. Agreement here is impossible, because (we say it with all reverence, but with confidence also) it was not intended by the Creator Himself. There seems to be an essential difference in the constitution of human minds, such as philosophers have noticed between Realists and Nominalists, between Platonists and Aristotelians, which requires to be met by a corresponding adaptability of the Divine communications. And hence the special value of sacraments. They have an elasticity of application to the human mind in its two great varieties, and the endless minor differences under which these varieties appear. The eloquent symbol, the visible object, the significant action, the pregnant fact, which has been made the vehicle or instrument of Divine truth, finds its way through the understanding and the feelings to the spiritual apprehension, adapting itself, in accordance with the subtle laws of our moral and mental constitution, to the capacity of the individual addressed. Symbolical words do this to some extent—parables, for instance, and other figurative utterances. But a symbolical action does it still more, and of such a nature is a sacrament. Surely we may trace the Divine goodness and wisdom very notably in this; in thus providing sacraments to be the perpetual witnesses and media of truth revealed,—the channels, under

various modes, of grace imparted. But if this be so, let the Church take heed lest she hinder this wise and beneficent purpose, lest, by requirements and interpretations and dogmatic definitions of her own, she mar the Divine machinery, stiffening its elastic play, and rendering it totally unfit to affect the hearts and inform the minds of whole classes of human beings."

Now, it is very true that there does seem to be an essential difference in the constitution of human minds. There is evidently a greater aptness on the part of some for receiving Evangelical Truth, and on the part of others for receiving Christian Truth; and the enemy of souls has made fearful use of this constitutional difference by arraying the two classes of truth antagonistically against each other. This is no new work; it has been carried on with ruinous success from the beginning. Almost all the controversies which have disturbed the peace and perverted the energies of the Church, and which have rent it to its very foundation, and almost all the persecutions which have blackened its annals have arisen from the self-same source. The divisive spirit has chosen his ground most artfully, and under the assumed appearance of an angel of light he has ever been stirring up an unholy zeal for one-sided truth intermixed with lies, and has thus done infinitely more damage to the cause of God

than could have been effected by all the overt opposition he could have brought to bear against it. But this very division of the Truth has been mercifully overruled for its preservation, and doubtless has prevented an indifference which would have been even more ruinous than contention. The Spirit of God is not an idle spectator of the conflict between good and evil, truth and error. There has ever been a holy zeal for Christian Truth, and there have ever been holy exemplifications of it, as well as a cruel intolerant bigotry for a carnal, superstitious, and idolatrous type of Christianity. On the other hand, among the men of evangelical views, who have more of the spirit of party than the spirit of Christ, there have ever been, and blessed be God there still are, very many who manifest the saving power and the accompanying graces of justifying faith; so that the difference in our mental constitution, which, by being perverted, has been made the cause of much evil, has also been effectively used for the conservation of truth, and for the revival and promotion of vital religion. Despite the confusion of our divisions, and the blind animosities of party, "the just Lord" in the midst of the Church, though undiscerned and dishonoured, has been consistently developing His own work and upholding His own Truth. Throughout the dispensation, Christ in His Church has continued to witness to the specific

characteristics of Christianity, while the Holy Spirit through the Church, has continued to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The two olive trees of Zechariah's mystic vision, which through the golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves, have not wearied of yielding their beneficent supply. "These are the two anointed ones who stand before the Lord of the whole earth," and these do not receive what they bestow, but have the oil in themselves. Are there any, save Christ and the Holy Spirit, to whom such descriptions can refer, and, if our interpretation be correct, to these should seem to correspond the two Witnesses whose strange career is sketched in the Apocalypse. In sackcloth they bore their testimony, and sorrowful indeed has been the work of their great Antitypes, amidst the strife of brethren, the prostitution and exaggeration of Truths, the undisguised contempt or actual hostility of a defiant world. Yet the Olive Trees remain, and still from each the oil flows on.

Surely it is high time that those who really desire the glory of God should cease to attempt to oppose the one to the other, and be willing rather humbly to draw near, and fill their poor shallow vessels from each!

God forbid that the great mystical city of the Prophet's vision, which spiritually is called Sodom

and Egypt, and where (spiritually) our Lord has been crucified, should find its place and actual realization in these dominions. But let us not too boastfully trust in our own strength. Our national piety, as we all know, is not of the highest order, and there is a fearful spirit of worldliness—of money-getting, money-loving, and pleasure-seeking, throughout the land. Doubtless there is a great amount of evangelical piety and a good deal of earnestness and some little life in the Church, but there is no surer way of destroying both Church life and Evangelical life, than by pitting them in deadly conflict against each other. It needs no prophet to foresee that we are either about to have a restoration to Christian unity, with all its powers and blessings, to enable us in these last days to evangelize the world, or a conflict of parties—an unholy warfare which will be both protracted and ruinous. Should the latter of these alternatives unhappily be adopted, Romanism and disguised Infidelity, both of which are only too prevalent in our day, will reap an abundant harvest. If the result could be foretold we might now regard the prophecy, as Hazael did that of Elisha. But party spirit, if not mercifully checked from Above, would still go on in its murderous course until its iniquity were consummated by the death of the witnesses.

The writer in the *Edinburgh Review* suggests that

the language of the baptismal office might be so modified that both Churchmen and Evangelicals might honestly regard it as giving expression to their own conceptions, and that the term regenerate should be either altered, or that its meaning should not be restricted by the expressions which are used in connection with it. Now I have a very strong conviction from the spirit in which the whole article is written, that if the writer were clearly to see that Christian Truth is one thing, and that Evangelical Truth is another, and that, although they ought always to be combined, yet they have assuredly been separated, and that Churchmen are God's witnesses for Regeneration and Christian Truth, just as surely as Evangelicals are His witnesses for the remedial doctrines of grace, he would be the last man in the world to give his sanction to any such alterations, or to say that it is impossible for spiritually enlightened men to be of one mind on the subject of the sacraments, notwithstanding their constitutional differences. Would Evangelicals consent to the modification of the Eleventh Article, wherein it is declared that we are justified by faith *only*? Would they consent to the omission of that little word "*only*?" There are thousands of Churchmen who would like very much to have it erased, but would it be a kindness to them to let them have their desire? And if Evangelicals

were to consent to its erasure, they would not only commit a suicidal act, but they would be unfaithful to their trust as God's witnesses for Evangelical Truth. Every man who has any measure of evangelical light desires that the Articles should bear even a stronger testimony to Evangelical Truth. I am sure I do so most sincerely, and I would not consent to the omission of that little word for all that the world could offer me. Now, whatever view you may have taken of what I have written, —whether you receive the Church's teaching as I have expounded it, or whether you reject it—you must clearly see, and I am sure you will as freely admit, that enlightened Churchmen cannot make concessions to the advocates of revision, any more than Evangelicals, without being unfaithful to God's trust, as His witnesses to Christian truth, and without sinning against the light which He has given them. Even those Churchmen who do not see the grounds of the Church's teaching, have the authority of Scriptural language, primitive antiquity, and the Liturgy of the Church, to all which they reverentially defer, and confidently adhere, to support and justify them in resisting any attempts that may be made to lower the Church's language with respect to the Christian sacraments. Besides, our Blessed Lord, as Head of the Church, has hitherto preserved Christian Truth by His Church and

sacraments, and He will continue to preserve them unto the end. Churchmen must be brought to see that Evangelical Truth, which they are blindly opposing, is the very thing they want; and Evangelicals must be brought to see that Church Truth is the very thing they want, to raise their religion from the Abrahamic to the Christian standard. And, as Evangelicals have a measure of spiritual light and life, the consideration of their defects, to which they have been hitherto marvellously blinded, ought to begin with them; and if God will mercifully open their eyes to the apprehension of Christian Truth, I am persuaded that Churchmen will at once receive their testimony as to the saving power of evangelical truth; while as long as they continue to oppose Christian truth, Churchmen will not receive their testimony. I know from experience that my efforts to impart Evangelical Truth to Churchmen would have been a thousandfold more successful than they have been, but for the prejudice excited in their minds against Evangelical truth, by the conduct of Evangelicals in rejecting Christian truth. Churchmen say, and with reason, if these men are really spiritually enlightened, how comes it that they cannot understand the nature and objects of the Christian sacraments, or discern the self-denying character of Christianity? Now there is to me,

although not to them; a very plain answer to this painful question. Since the Reformation, Churchmen, with rare exceptions, have mistaken the spiritual life for the regenerate life—the life restored to us at our justification, for the life of Christ, which is gradually formed in us by regeneration, as the life of the old Adam is destroyed; and the consequence has been, and is, that they vainly seek and expect justification and restoration to spiritual life through the Christian sacraments, instead of seeking it in the way in which it is always and only to be found, that is, by faith in Christ's vicarious and atoning sacrifice. Evangelicals clearly see this most fatal mistake, and having themselves realized the powers and blessings of justification in the way of God's appointment, they have virtually repudiated the Christian sacraments as unrealities, instead of setting themselves to correct the Churchmen's error; and what is more, they imagine that they have obtained the regenerate life, when they have only obtained the restoration of spiritual life, which was forfeited by the fall. The consequence of this is, they have repudiated the whole self-denying system of Christianity, as a system, and accounted it a Judaising legality. The whole matter is clear enough, and easily to be discerned, but O my most loving God! how are men to be made poor in spirit who believe themselves to

be "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing?" And how are men to be taught who imagine that they have all knowledge, and that wisdom is alone with them?

Nothing is impossible with God, and I have good hope that He is about to undertake for His Church, and that the true cause of all our differences will be made apparent; for it only requires to be seen to be at once and for ever put away. By His wonderful overruling, the Bible, the Church, the Sacraments, and Christianity, for they cannot really be so separated as to destroy each other, have been hitherto preserved. Had we an inspired history of the witnessing in sackcloth of Christ in His Church, and of the Spirit in the world, beginning where the Acts of the Apostles terminate, and carried onward to the present hour, what a book of marvels would be presented to us! Throughout the lengthened conflict between truth and error, between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, between sin and holiness, the Church and not the world has been the battle-field. It has not been simply a contest between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, but all the powers of Heaven and all the powers of Hell have employed every kind of human agency on either side; and strange is the part that man has played in the awful strife. The powers of darkness have not

only done evil by evil means, but have striven, and too successfully, to bring evil out of good; and the powers of light have not only made use of holy instrumentalities, but have successfully availed themselves of adverse agencies, and brought good out of evil.

Taking the sure Word of God for my ground, I cannot doubt that the whole fabric of Popery is founded upon a lie. Evidently no succession from St. Peter was ever intended, nor was any provision made for it, as he was the specially appointed Apostle of the Circumcision, although Christ put honour upon him as His first confessor, by making him the first preacher of the Gospel both to Jew and Gentile. But provision for succession *was made* by St. Paul—the specially called and the specially appointed Apostle to the Gentiles; and if we have succession at all, it is from him, and not from St. Peter. No man can read the Epistle to the Romans with any care, without discovering that the Gospel was first preached at Rome, most probably by Priscilla and Aquila, and most certainly by lay instrumentality, and that St. Paul speaks of it as being under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction; while St. Peter dates his Epistle at Babylon, which was undeniably written towards the close of his ministry, and which is addressed to the Jews scattered abroad, probably with special reference to those inhabiting the several

countries in proximity to Babylon, which doubtless had been the sphere of his labours. If he was crucified at Rome, he must have been carried thither with that intent, and not to be installed as the bishop of Rome, over which, as the metropolis of the Gentile world, he could have no legitimate jurisdiction. But although the Romish Church has fabricated an anti-scriptural mythe with regard to its foundation, although she makes her boast of a hierarchical jurisdiction which is positively anti-christian, and lays claim to a vicariate which is blasphemous; and although she has daringly adulterated her creed, and corrupted her worship by superstitious and idolatrous usages, and at the Council of Trent actually repudiated the vital doctrine of justification by faith; yet Christ, under whose feet God hath put all things, and given Him to be Head over all things for His Church, by His wonderful overruling, has made the Church of Rome the conservator of His Truth, the preserver of His Church and sacraments, and His witness for Christianity, notwithstanding it has been of a legal carnal, superstitious, and idolatrous type. And what is the result? In the nineteenth century we have a Church purged of every doctrinal error, and God's witness for every class of truth contained in His Word. In a small insulated spot which God has selected out of this wide world, which He has

exalted as a city upon the mountain top above the hills, to which He has given power and dominion above all the kingdoms of the earth, it has pleased Him to establish a pure National Church. And if we will become willing instruments in His hands, and faithful witnesses to His truth, He will use us and honour us as His agents in performing all His purposes of mercy and of grace towards His long-neglected world, which is yet in darkness because of the Church's unfaithfulness to His original commission. But God is not dependent upon human faithfulness. Our differences, contentions, and divisions must be put away before we can have the fulness either of His powers or blessings; and they cannot be put away, so as to please Him, by repudiating an all-important portion of His truth, upon the loving and obedient reception of which depends the attainment of that object which He contemplates as our high calling and ultimate destiny. It is my conviction that the candlestick of Rome would have been long ago removed from its place, and Rome would now have been as Pergamos and Thyatira, if the Church of England had witnessed with greater faithfulness and distinctness to the self-denying doctrines of Christianity. It is hardly conceivable that there should have been a departure, in her case, from the general law of God's dealing with apostate Churches, if she had not been God's

witness for certain all-important truths, more than any other existing branch of the visible Church, notwithstanding her superstitious and idolatrous usages; and it is simply the fact that she is so, however strongly it may be denied. No man will pretend to say that Evangelicals or Nonconformists are God's witnesses to the self-denying precepts of Christianity. These are the very parties who repudiate them, who see no necessity for them, and who are lavish of their cautions against them, as tending to legality. Nor could it be otherwise, else their conduct would not be in accordance with their teaching; for when men conceive that salvation is the highest object of their probationary state, there is no need whatever of Christianity, either in whole or in part. Abraham and all the Old Testament believers, as I have repeatedly said, were justified by faith, although they knew nothing of Christianity, as it had then no existence, and had not then been revealed by the teaching and example of Christ: and all who have been justified, since the commencement of the Christian era, have been justified by faith, when they were great sinners, and not good Christians. And as to the allegation that because we are converted, therefore, as a natural and necessary effect, we become good Christians, it is positively untrue. We may become moral men, and religious men, but that is not Christianity.

Neither will any one assert that the few Tractarians here and there throughout the land, who act consistently according to their principles—that is to say, who fast occasionally, who attend the daily service, and give themselves to works of charity, constitute our Church a witness for world-renouncement, self-denial, and cross-bearing. Now, although I neither approve of monasteries or convents, nor of flying away from our responsibilities as God's stewards by a voluntary poverty, yet must it be admitted that under the Roman system the external world is actually renounced. Although I think we have plenty of crosses to take up daily, which are not taken up, without making crosses for ourselves, yet the very making of crosses, the estimation in which the symbol is held, the speaking and writing about crosses by Roman Catholics, however puerile and superstitious such practices may sometimes be, is a certain kind of testimony to the doctrine which most Protestants have yet to learn; and we shall never rightly understand our Bibles until we learn it. We are not only to believe that Christ was crucified for us, but we must also believe that we must be crucified with Him—that our earthly affections must be nailed to the cross, and that we must take up our cross daily, and follow Him. Because we do not see this doctrine of the cross, we mistake it for the doctrine of Christ crucified; but

it is by the cross, and not by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, that "the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world." I am far from thinking that the Roman Catholic takes the right way of subduing his creaturely will, when he obeys his priest against the dictates of his own judgment, or that he takes the best way of overcoming the pride of his natural spirit when he does voluntary acts of humiliation; but still here is a testimony to the truth that our self-will must be subdued, and that the proud natural spirit must be humbled before Christ can be formed in us. For before the New Man can be formed, the Old Adam must die. The death comes first in the work of regeneration, and the resurrection afterwards, as the Apostle expresses it, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, *we shall be also* in the likeness of His resurrection." It is not in the regeneration as in justification, for in justification the life comes first and then obedience, since a dead soul could not obey; but the regeneration always presupposes restoration to spiritual life by justification, and therefore it is in the power of Christ, and by Divine grace, that we die unto self, before the regenerate life or the life of Christ is imparted to us, and that, too, takes places in righteous proportion; for, as we die to self, as I have often already observed, so Christ is formed in us, and so His life

is imparted to us. Similarly I consider the adoration directed to the sacramental elements a misdirection, for Christ presides at His own feast, and He himself, as spiritually present, ought to be adored, and not the feast, although by the elements He communicates His life and nature in increasing measure to the worthy recipient; but how seldom does direct adoration form any distinct part in the public or private devotions of Protestants. I am no admirer of operatic services; at the same time, I cannot help discerning the distinction between a service offered unto God, and singing to excite our own minds and to please ourselves. I do not undervalue that utilitarianism in religion, of which we are so justly accused; yet, surely God, and not ourselves, ought to be the Alpha and the Omega in all things. In no one instance that I have adduced do I believe that Rome is right in practice, but in every instance I am convinced that she is God's witness, though in a carnal, superstitious, or idolatrous way, to what pertains to Christianity; and on no other ground can I account for her being suffered to exist so long, as the amount of evil which she has caused and is perpetuating is incalculable and appalling. As she is apparently tottering to her fall, so much louder is the call for Christian unity, for which, in her own carnal way, she has been hitherto the only witness for God.

There is no wisdom in blinding ourselves to our own mistakes and deficiencies; and that mind is not enlightened, as it ought to be, in these days of increasing light (as well as increasing infidelity), which does not discern that Christianity possesses doctrines and self-denying precepts; indeed a nature, spirit, principles of conduct and an object peculiar to itself. All these are symbolized by the Christian sacraments, and for these the visible Church of Christ is God's witness in her proper character as the pillar and ground of the truth. When Rome ceased to be a dependable witness, God most mercifully raised up the Church of England to supply her deficiencies and to rectify her mistakes. It requires just a little spiritual discernment to perceive that Evangelicalism has its own doctrines, nature, spirit, and principles, and its own object and distinctive characteristics, and that they are not homogeneous, nor could they be so, with those of Christianity. Evangelical Truth is purely remedial, it is a revelation of grace, to be accepted by faith; Christianity on the other hand is in its nature progressive, and has to do with these good works which spring from faithfulness to grace. Hence the mistaken and interminable contention between faith and works. The Churchman has always Christianity in his eye, and beyond all disputation Christianity comes through holy dying to

self; while the Evangelical has always salvation in his mind, and there is no doubt whatever that salvation is of grace, and by faith only. But although Evangelicalism and Christianity are not homogeneous, they ought always to co-exist under the present dispensation, not merely harmoniously but in combination. In short, in Evangelicalism all is of grace and by faith; in Christianity all is by grace and through faith. In Evangelicalism there is salvation from the penalty of sin, and also from the domination of outward sin, and there is the love of gratitude to Christ as our Saviour. There is also the gift of the Spirit, hence spiritual life and the Spirit of adoption; and there is enlightenment and the fruits of the Spirit in measure, and there may be growth in grace. Besides there is ever imputed righteousness, a sense of acceptance and forgiveness, and with these moral uprightness and certain strong and religious and devotional affections. But all this is not Christianity; all this the Old Testament believers possessed; and all this can exist and does exist without either Church or sacraments. Evangelicalism has no need of the Church, and no Evangelical has a right conception of the nature and object of the Church, else he would no be longer an Evangelical. He regards the Church as a kind of agency established for preaching the Gospel. Now, the truth is, evangelizing work should always

be done out of the Church, and generally speaking it is so done; for that kind of preaching of the Gospel, as it is called, which is done in too many churches and chapels, may give the hearers Evangelical views and religio-intellectual entertainment, but it is not calculated to awaken sinners and to lead them to Christ. Such preaching most certainly does harm instead of good to believers, by inducing them to imagine that they have little more to do than to listen to the Gospel, or the proclamation of salvation through faith in Christ, which they have already believed. The Church was not instituted for the preaching of the Gospel. To preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven was the first, and necessarily the first part of the Apostolical commission; for nations could not be baptized into the one body, that is the Church, until they were evangelized. The Church was instituted "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 12, 13.) Here we have Christianity. The Church, the New Covenant, the Sacraments, the Gospels which give us the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, and its exemplifications in the life of Christ, and Christianity itself, are

inseparable. They may be mentally conceived of as a system or theory without being livingly realized; but whether mentally conceived, or livingly realized, they are as essential to each other as the parts of any other whole, and there is the most perfect correspondency between them in all their parts. The New or Christian Covenant is a covenant of works, (though not of commandments,) to be wrought by the power of Divine grace and through faith. Salvation from the penalty and power of outward sin, is not its object. That is procured by justification, and is sealed to us by Covenant. Christ Himself, not as the Saviour simply, but as the second Adam who is a quickening Spirit, and has life in Himself to communicate to whomsoever He will, is the New Covenant; and He imparts His own life and nature to all His covenanted people, who leave all to follow Him, and who faithfully obey Him, even as the first Adam imparted his life and nature to all his posterity. Now as the first and second Adam are the veriest opposites, and cannot co-exist in power and domination in the same man, but the first must die as the second increases in strength and grows in us; therefore the weakening and final death of the old man is ever represented in Scripture as the necessary condition of the regeneration or re-creation of the new man, after the nature and image of Christ, "in righte-

ousness and true holiness." Hence the doctrine of the regeneration and all that is connected with it is exclusively Christian; hence the precepts which are exclusively Christian are all self-denying, world-renouncing, flesh-mortifying, and cross-bearing; hence the virtues which are peculiarly Christian are self-abasing, self-renouncing, self-sacrificing after the example and spirit of Christ. Hence the Church is the body of Christ, and not a *voluntary association* or community of individuals; and hence the first Christian sacrament symbolizes the death and burying of the old man, and the resurrection of the new man, after the likeness of Christ, as well as the necessary preliminary washing and sanctifying of the child born under the curse of the broken law. Thus the final end of the regeneration of the whole man in spirit, soul and body, is represented in its essential elements by the initiatory sacramental rite of the Covenant. And the second sacrament in like manner symbolizes and imparts, to the prepared recipient, the very life and nature of Christ; for Christ saith, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I IN HIM. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." At the same time the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine symbolize and commemorate the crucifixion and the blood-

shedding, and thus, I am thankful to say, leave room for a certain kind of discerning the Lord's body, even on the part of those who do not see the deeper Christian verity. We must either accept of Christianity as a whole, or ignore it altogether, for division of its parts reduces it to so many apparent unrealities. The Church, the Covenant, the Sacraments, the Gospels, the doctrines, the precepts, all speak the same language, all point to the same object, and all are means to the same end. And I am bound to say, and I say it in the spirit of Christian love, not in the spirit of controversy, but to awaken attention to the astounding fact, that Evangelicals and Nonconformists have virtually repudiated the whole. For what is the Church, if it does not create unity by the Baptism into one body, if it does not manifest Christ, if it is not a pillar and ground of the truth? How can Christ be the Covenant of Evangelicals and Nonconformists, when they do not discern the fact, or admit the truth, that Christ is their Covenant; when in short they deny that there is any other covenant than the Covenant of Redemption? What are the Christian Sacraments if they be accounted mere ceremonies or empty signs which may impress the mind, but communicate no reality? What are the Gospels and the life and teaching of Christ, of which they give us a detailed account, if

His precepts are exaggerations, if His example is not to be followed, and if there be no such thing as union with Him, as the second Adam, by the impartation of His life and nature? What is Christianity if its very nature and object is not discerned? If any author of the Evangelical school, in or out of the Church, can be named, who has written intelligently upon any one of these subjects, or upon the life of Christ in the soul of man, which is true Christianity, since the days of Leighton, excepting some of the best German divines, I will freely admit that what I have said is only of general and not universal application.

I wish I had the ability to present these all important truths more vividly before the Evangelical mind, and to impress them upon it with greater power. I have done my best, and I am sure God has helped me, to exhibit them in an earnest painstaking spirit; and if my manner of writing has given the impression of harshness or presumption, or both, I trust it will be kindly attributed only to my eagerness to express the truth in a clear and forcible manner. The object for which I am writing is ever before my mind, and it is so incalculably important—so much is at stake—so inconceivably much is to be won or lost for the Church, for Nonconformists and for the whole world, and so deeply are the high interests of eternity concerned, that I

may well be excused when I repeat the same truths, when it serves my purpose, and make use of the strong language, which deep and anxious earnestness may suggest. God knoweth I do not write to provoke, but to convince. It is a difficult thing to teach those who are unwilling to be taught because they think that their work is to teach, and that it is presumption in any man to place them in the school of the learner; and men are very hard to be convinced of their mistakes and defects, who have long conceived that both in light and piety they are very far in advance of the Church; still I trust by God's blessing that my labour will not be altogether in vain.

There is no doubt a great deal to be done before Nonconformists can be reunited to the Church in a body, and it is much to be desired that they should *so* be reunited rather than in any other way. If Churchmen will meet them, as they ought, they will have nothing to give up, excepting what all good men should be glad to part with, I mean our prejudices, our selfwill, and other similar hindrances to godliness. If Presbyterianism be in the way, by all means let them bring it with them, for we want it badly. Both presbyteries and synods, regularly constituted and possessed of their just authority, would be a great help to the good government of the Church. It would both induce a warmer brotherly feeling

among the clergy, and give to the laity their proper standing in the Church, and that voice in Church matters to which they are entitled. If Congregationalism be insisted upon, so much the better, for it is very much needed. If there be a plentiful effusion of spiritual life into the Church, we shall not be able to do without it, for a living flock requires to be carefully tended and watchfully looked after. Every clergyman ought to have an effective staff of godly praying men—call them elders, call them deacons, or give them any other name, to assist him in visiting the sick, in giving cottage lectures in the different villages, as spiritual overseers in their several districts, watching over the living portion of the flock, exhorting sinners to repent, and in every possible way encouraging piety and suppressing vice. A dead service is easily performed for a dead congregation, but no clergyman without some such assistants can keep a living church alive, or effectively work his parish; and no minister of Christ ought either to take upon himself the whole responsibility of exercising discipline, or the entire burden of Church matters and parochial duties. The truth is, the work which ought to be done is not done, neither can it be done without some such organization. But what could be done with Methodism? It is wanted most of all; and it is much to be lamented both for its own sake and

for the sake of the Church, that Methodists were ever separated from her. The Church, the nation, and the world would not now have been in their present state of spiritual degradation if the Church had possessed, as she ought to possess, an effective evangelizing agency; and she will never accomplish the work which, as a national Church she ought to do, without it. But how could such an augmented organization consist with Episcopacy? It would simply insure its efficiency by dividing its duties and responsibilities, and by modifying its pretensions, without lessening its legitimate authority. All the *isms* would be healthfully modified, their tendencies to evil would be prevented, and their agency for good immeasurably increased. Every member would have his own office and work, and yet all would be in subjection one to another; so that in very deed God has provided to our hand every kind of agency and instrumentality, not only for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ, but for the spiritual enlightening and edification of the whole nation, yea, and for the evangelization of the world. It will be a sad case if the pride, wilfulness and ignorance of men, excited into action by the malice and machinations of Satan, should prevent a combination and unity which God desires, which Christianity demands, which our own eternal

interests require, and which is so loudly called for by the spiritual necessities of the Church, the nation, and the world. Were we to weep tears of blood they would be but a poor expression of grief for the madness, blindness, and infatuation of men who bear the name of Christ, and who are on their way to the judgment seat, and yet who recklessly sacrifice the interests of Christ's kingdom, set at nought the declared will of God, bring a reproach upon our holy religion, and take antagonistic positions against each other, which are sure to engender envyings and contentions and strifes and divisions and every evil thing, and thus lend themselves to do the work of the devil, instead of living in brotherly unity under God's fulness of blessing, and in accordance with His will, unitedly prosecuting the work of God. And what do they gain? They gain the power of boasting themselves against each other, of accusing each other as the doers and inflicters of wrong, of envying each other's success, and of glorying in each other's failures and failings, of saying bitter things against each other, and of driving a thriving and exciting trade by making each other's truth a lie. And what do they lose by their gain? I hope it may not be their own souls, but most assuredly the spirit of Christ is not theirs, and therefore the prize of the high calling of God can never be their crown

of rejoicing. Excuses, justifications and accusations are not His currency, with whom we have to do, and He will reject them all. The children of God bear all things; they patiently instruct, they warn, they exhort, they entreat, but they do not resist evil; and even the contradictions of sinners are borne with meekness, and only tend to perfect the long-suffering of the saints of God.

I say it again, with unfeigned thankfulness, that Nonconformists in returning to the bosom of the Church have everything to gain and nothing to lose. They could not rightfully, and therefore they ought not to be asked to give up anything to which an enlightened spiritual man could honestly attach any value. There is not one truth which they hold which requires to be sacrificed or even modified, and not one principle for which they contend that needs to be abandoned. And while such a restoration to unity, needful though it be, and in accordance as it most unquestionably is with the spirit and precepts of Christ, and with the will of God, would yet doubtless have to encounter much opposition from the carnal mind within the Church, and from the wilful and contentious spirit which sectarianism has engendered and fostered; still I am persuaded that there are very many of the clergy, and by far the greater proportion of the laity, who would heartily unite with me in saying,

"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good;" and, Come with us, and ye will do us good.

I shall now endeavour to shew you how the Church witnesses for Christianity, how she manifests Christ; and that regeneration and the regenerate life are the subject-matter of all her teaching; and you will at once perceive that Nonconformists in returning to the Church will have a class and order of Divine truth opened up to them, which will lead them away from first principles, and give them higher and holier aspirations. We shall not rob them of their grateful love to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us; but if they will cease to look *at the things which appear*, and begin thoughtfully to examine *the things that are*, they will find everything which tends to awaken and cherish a deeper love for Christ the Lord, as well as for Jesus the Saviour—a love for Him who is not only our Saviour, but our everlasting Father, Brother, Friend, our Lover, Lord, and Husband, yea, our very Life and our All, and who is very loveliness itself in all these relationships—the mighty God and the eternal King. O, we do not forget, and throughout eternity we shall never forget, that He has bought us with His blood. We glory in the fact—that we are not our own, but His. And because we are blood-bought, we want to feel more deeply the obligation to glorify Him in our bodies and in

our spirits, which are His. But He is also the object of our choice. He hath chosen us, and we have chosen Him. In this, I speak the words with reverence, we have reciprocity with God—the real, the soul-exalting, the ineffable reciprocity of Love. We are not only His saved ones, His adopted ones, the children of His family, the inmates of His household, the members of His body, and the subjects of His kingdom; but He who gave Himself for us, also gives Himself to us. As the second Adam and our everlasting Father, He imparts His own life and nature to us. By a mysterious regeneration we are made partakers of the Divine nature, so that we become in very deed the sons of God, the offspring and brethren of Christ, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, one with Christ as Christ is one with the Father. The Lord hath set His love upon us, and is preparing us as His Bride, and His eternal Spouse; and for such an union oneness of life and nature is the necessary qualification. It was on Calvary that Jesus finished His atoning work, and to Him as the glorious remedial Antitype of the brazen serpent, the sinner must look to be saved. But the Church is His appointed means for accomplishing the higher purposes of His love. By Baptism Christ becomes our Covenant of regeneration. As we are baptized by the one Spirit into the one body, the Church in a true

sense may be said to be both our mother and our birthplace. It is our nursery, the school of Christ, our banqueting-hall, the house of God, our present home where His name is recorded, which is ever filled with His presence, and to His loving ones it is the very gate of heaven; for the members, the Word, the ordinances, the ministry, yea, and the very fabric itself are parts of the whole—all are His—the net and the kingdom, the mustard seed and the leaven, the treasure and the pearl, the good seed in the field, and the pillar and ground of the truth. It is also the place of our discipline, of our trials and sorrows, and the furnace of our purification. The bad fishes which will continue to be enclosed with the good, the tares which grow among the wheat, are the carnal mind in the Church, which crucifies Christ in His living members, and causes His saints to be "companions in tribulation, and in His kingdom and patience." Coming to the Church is like coming to Christ. There are sorrows and sufferings in many varieties of form. The Scripture must be fulfilled, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." But to the eye of faith, and the heart of love, how much is there that speaks of Him, and that points to Him, who is her light and life! Nothing is empty, all is full of Christ, who is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The

Church not only represents and manifests, but actually communicates Christ. We are the very members of His body, and through us and by us He acts and speaks. His life is brought consecutively before us from His birth to His ascension. Our worship is a holy and blissful intercourse between Him and His people, as well as a reasonable service. His ordinances communicate His life, spirit and nature; and in the glass of His word, which she is continually holding up, "we behold His glory, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

I can take only one branch at present of this great subject, and that shall be a portion of the Prayer Book, because it is the one thing which is chiefly under our consideration, and I must confine my observations to the Church's manifestation of Christ in her annual course of teaching. The question is often asked, "What is meant by the Church's teaching:" and I shall try to give some general conception of it; but nothing more must be expected than the veriest outline limited to the exhibition of Christianity, as distinguished from Evangelicalism; for, from first to last, as I have already said, regeneration is the subject-matter of the Church's teaching. And I must therefore say, if baptismal regeneration be ignored, the Prayer Book is as unmeaning and as unsuitable a manual of devotion

for the use of those who are determined to rest in Evangelicalism as can well be conceived. No mere revision can make it suitable for them. They must have an entirely new book, otherwise they must be unfaithful to the light they possess, for most certainly there is little or nothing that is homogeneous to their views and principles in the Prayer Book, save only that in it the realization of the saving power of evangelical truth is always presupposed.

As Christ is the Sun of the Church—the source of her light and life, His rising and course regulate her calendar. The proper celebration of our Lord's Nativity demands a suitable preparation, therefore the Christian year commences on the first Sunday in Advent—that is, nearly a month before the natural year; so that in this, as in all things, Jesus hath the pre-eminence. But the festival of Saint Andrew the Apostle generally falls between the termination of the old Christian year and the first Sunday in Advent. This is as it ought to be, for St. Andrew is the type of missions, or of evangelizing work. His name is significant—"The courageous one"—the manly breaker up of the way. He was the first that came to Jesus, and he was the first who brought another to Him. After our Lord had been consecrated to His office at His baptism, by the descent and abiding of the Holy

Spirit upon Him, and after He had overcome the tempter in the wilderness, He stood alone on the banks of the Jordan, waiting His Father's will, to draw disciples unto Him. On the first day of His mission no man came unto Him, although the Baptist had proclaimed Him "The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." Even in this we have a comforting lesson of patient perseverance. On the second day behold Him again on the banks of the Jordan, where repentance is being preached, and again the Baptist cries aloud, "Behold the Lamb of God." Andrew and another venture to follow Him. Jesus turned, (bless Him!) and looked upon His first two followers. O what a moment for Him and for them, for time and for eternity! The look! We see it now, and now we feel its power. And then, the first word of His ministry! What will ye? What seek ye? It is put to every comer, and there is an answer in the coming heart which no language can express. "Master, where dwellest thou?" "Come and see." They came; they abode with Him; and the deep craving of the seeking soul was satisfied—they found "the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." While the heart is melted, and the tears flow, who that have in any measure the bowels of Christ can refrain from crying, "What pity it is that men in the foolishness of their wisdom should

blind themselves to the way of finding Christ!" Alas, they reason, they argue, they write books to bewilder others with their own bewilderments, but they will not "come and see." And yet this is the only way of finding Him, and of finding in Him our salvation and our all. Described most clearly in every way, by every variety of language and figure, and here so simply and lovingly exemplified, yet the wise and the prudent see it not, and even the awakened sinner is only driven to it after having striven to find peace in every other way *in vain*. Andrew bringeth Peter, and Philip bringeth Nathaniel, who in spite of his prejudices and misconceptions came, and saw, and was united to the family of Jesus. The Church, doubtless guided by the wisdom of her living Head, sets forth the same proper order which I have laboured to exhibit throughout this exposition—first the work of the Evangelist, and then the Church of Christ.

Throughout the penitential weeks of Advent—the coming days which precede our Lord's nativity, the Church, following the example of the prophets, presents to us unitedly our Lord's first Advent in great humility, and His second in power and great glory. We at once pass from evangelizing work to the Church; consequently we find nothing about conversion, or of Christ simply as a Saviour, in the Church's teaching throughout the season of Advent.

We are called upon to prepare for welcoming Him with Hosannas as our King, "who cometh unto us meek and lowly, sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass;" and we are exhorted to awake out of our sleep and to put on the Lord Jesus, that we may be prepared to meet Him at His second coming. Then there is His Advent to us in the Word; for, as light preceded the work of creation, so must it precede the work of regeneration. The responsibility of Christ's ministers is strikingly introduced into the teaching by one of the Epistles; and, in the last Gospel, there is a call for a ministry of repentance in the spirit and power of Elias to make straight the way of the Lord. On the third Sunday in Advent we have a most edifying contrast between the natural spirit, under Divine grace, and in the highest state of sanctification, and the spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of the regenerate. The holy Baptist, having spent a dreary winter in the fortress of Machærus, begins to doubt whether Jesus be indeed the promised Messias. If so, why does He not come to his deliverance, and why is not the kingdom restored unto Israel? The natural spirit under suffering will ever say, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" It is the very nature of the creaturely spirit to resist evil and to evade the cross; but the spirit of Christ resisteth not evil, and is obedient even unto the

death of the cross. And then there is our Lord's reply to the Baptist's question; the doubt is removed, and the doubter is commended instead of being blamed. This is Christianity, and this is the spirit of the truly regenerate. The order of the teaching is as follows; on the first Sunday in Advent the Church reminds us that Christ has come and given us Himself for our example, and assigned to us our work; and that He is coming again as our Judge to reward or to punish according to our deserts. On the second Sunday He is represented as coming to us in His Scriptures. On the third by His Ministers; and on the fourth in His Ordinances. The Lessons for the season are taken from Isaiah, bearing most touchingly upon the Church's unfaithfulness, and the long-suffering of God. There is both warning and exhortation. The vineyard is the Lord's, and yet it bringeth forth wild grapes. Still there is the "Come now, let us reason together," and the promise is not withdrawn, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The first Advent is past, the second is approaching, the intermediate ones are present; for Christ is in His Church, that He may come into our hearts and incorporate Himself with our very being; and this penitential season is appointed as a special time of preparation for His reception; for Christ in us, is not only our hope of

glory, but is that alone which can really excite in us "the love of His appearing."

The festival of the Nativity is ushered in by songs of rejoicing. It is a day of glad tidings of great joy unto all people. The birth-day of God Incarnate—our "Saviour who is Christ the Lord," ought to be had in everlasting remembrance; and there is everything in the services of the day which is calculated to excite our hearts to celebrate it with humble thankfulness and holy joy. Much is it to be lamented that a carnal abuse of this mother of all festivals, as St. Chrysostom calls it, or any other cause, should have induced our non-conforming brethren to ignore a commemoration, which true love needs no command to celebrate. Here, as everywhere, we have to lament over the workings of the divisive and rationalistic spirit. The refusal to have fellowship with the whole of Christendom in such a commemoration is not in accordance with the spirit of Christ. It would have been a better evidence that they were under the Spirit's guidance if they had stirred up the religious mind to counteract the abuse by a celebration of greater solemnity and of unmixed devotion. But, besides the rendering of a grateful, heartfelt, joyous homage to our infant Saviour, and our new-born King, which unselfish love delights to pay, there is an all-important teaching which the Church has not

failed to set forth, and which the festivals, as well as her sacraments, most strikingly symbolize. In the first place, we are given to see that the decree of Augustus is only an instrument for effecting the purpose of the King of kings. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Then we are taught that the announcement of Christ, *as a Saviour*, is "glad tidings unto all people," that there is no great distance from Bethlehem's plains to Bethlehem's stable, and that the sinner in coming to his Saviour has nothing to bring, but only to come as he is. They, on the other hand, who seek Him *for their King* have only starlight guidance, have far to travel through dangerous tracts, in the winter season, and they bring with them their offering of gold and frankincense and myrrh. In the Collect for the day, after devoutly acknowledging the Father's love in sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world, our covenant position and high calling are brought before us. We pray that God may grant "that we being regenerate, and made the children of God by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by His Holy Spirit." The first Lesson for the morning service is taken from the ninth chapter of Isaiah, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father,

The Prince of Peace." In the second Lesson we are led into the stable of Bethlehem, that we may behold the heavenly Babe, wrapt in swaddling clothes and laid in a manager. This lesson of His lowly birth gives us to know the place where alone Christ becomes the life of the regenerate man. The little Bethlehem, the stable, the manger, the poverty of spirit, which is the object of the first Beatitude, and the becoming as little children after conversion express the self-same truth. Self-abasing humility is the first and great fundamental Christian grace, just as faith is the instrumental means of our justification. O that converted men could only be taught that, so long as self—proud, boastful, self-loving, self-seeking *self*—continues to reign within, there can be no birth-place in the heart for the lowly Jesus. *The manger is but the incipient cross, which takes its last death-form on Calvary.* When Christ gives us His name, and adopts us as the children of the Covenant, we are planted in the likeness of His death, and this plant must grow; there must be a daily dying to self, the bearing of the cross of the manger all the way from Bethlehem to Golgotha, else the resurrection power and the life of Christ can never be ours. This is the doctrine which our Saviour taught by His Word, by His life, and by His death. This is the doctrine which the Apostles and primitive Christians exemplified, which all the

Fathers have made the subject-matter of their teaching; and we must both learn it, and exemplify it, before we can be truthfully called the followers of Jesus. It will ever be a faithful saying, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us." Christianity is the union of the world's contradictories; "as dying, but behold we live; as sorrowful, but always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." Hence the Church, in the hour of her festivity, when she commemorates the birth of our Saviour and our King, leads us into the stable, and presents to us Jesus lying in a manger. On the three succeeding days, Stephen the Protomartyr, who, like his dying Lord, with his last breath commends his spirit to God, and prays for his murderers—the martyr in will as well as in deed: the Beloved Disciple—the martyr in will though not in deed: and the bleeding Innocents—the martyrs in deed though not in will, take their place around His lowly cradle. Thus, in the Church's light, which is the light of her Lord, is the world judged. Thus is the prince of this world cast out, for what is the world when we look at the Incarnate God in the manger but a thing of nought? What the pain of self-denial, but the glory of self-conquest on our way to the Tree of Life? What

the light affliction? What the much tribulation, but the appointed entrance into eternal glory? The Epistle is the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Gospel is the first chapter of the Gospel by St. John; all point to the regenerate life, and tell us what is meant by being "born of God."

After the Nativity comes the Circumcision, when we commemorate the mysterious, but very pregnant fact, that our Immaculate King, the Incarnate God, condescended to accept the badge and put on the livery of a sinner, by submitting to be circumcised. Here we have the first instalment, and the first-fruits of our Saviour's blood; for is there not a real and effective connection, though little and seldom discerned, between the circumcision of Christ, and that circumcision of the heart, which is made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, to which St. Paul has specially directed our attention? O how little do we know of Christ, or of what Christ has done for us! But this is not the Church's fault. She has set apart a day for commemorating the Circumcision of our Lord, to remind us that Jesus has consecrated the season of infancy, and that the children of the Theocracy are His by Covenant. That they are separated unto God, and ought not to be trained up as children of the world, but as denizens of the kingdom of Heaven, and heirs of eternal glory. Although "the

heir, while a child, differeth nothing from a servant, and is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father," yet his education ought not to be the education of a servant. The fact may be misunderstood or forgotten, but it is a fact still, that our children have been baptized into Christ's death, and therefore to the world they do not belong. And if they are trained up in the nurture of the Lord as the heirs of His kingdom, the power of Christ's circumcision will manifest itself increasingly throughout their period of infancy, and protect them against the pollutions by which even youth is assailed; and although circumcision is not justification, yet it is a good and fitting preparation for actual regeneration; and until its power is believed in, and cultivated with godly nurture, the days of Saintship will never return. In the Collect we pray that "God may grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit; that our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey His blessed will." The Sinless could only suffer as our Sin-bearer, for all suffering is the penalty of sin, and in Him there was no sin. Thus, while He was yet an infant of days, was the work of our redemption and the preparation for our regeneration commenced. Because the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him bodily, therefore, it is through the power of this His first

blood-shedding that our hearts are cut around, and separated from all that is earthly and fleshly, that they may, in very entireness, be yielded unto God. In the Epistle for the day the distinction is clearly drawn between Justification and Circumcision—the type of Baptism; shewing us, what I have so strongly and repeatedly brought forward in the course of this exposition, that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, and therefore that we also must be justified, although we have been baptized; for though, doubtless, preparatory training for regeneration is of incalculable value, yet the actual work of our regeneration cannot commence until we are in the state of justification. Now, this is the very teaching which Evangelicals and Nonconformists require. If it were acted upon, their children would cease to be a reproach and a byword because of their worldliness, and the lesson might be learned that the subjection of the natural will ought to commence in the cradle, and that the self-sacrificing principles of Christianity should have prominent recognition in the education of youth. What can we expect but a worldly religionism—Christ and the world too—so long as this mysterious source of Divine power, this first blood-shedding of our Incarnate God, is heedlessly passed by, at the dictate of a morbid rationalism, without one expression of gratitude, without the recognition of the

love and power of that first instalment of our Saviour's sufferings, whereby we are separated unto God, and without one fervent prayer for "that circumcision of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God"? Our baptism unto Christ's death implies, not merely the circumcision of the heart, but the world's crucifixion to us, and our crucifixion to the world, yea, the death of the selfish or creaturely life; but the former is a preparation for the latter; and while we neglect the means, it is vain to expect the consummation. The Gospel informs us that when He was circumcised He was called Jesus, the only name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved. Our New Year's Day is therefore the Lord's Name Day; the blessing of Jesus, the best new year's gift; the confession of His name, the first new year's duty. To begin the new year aright we must begin it in the name of Jesus. "It throws the right light on the past, gives the needed weight to our resolutions, and provides the anchor of true confidence for our future hopes."

The Circumcision is followed by the Epiphany, that is, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. On this day the wise men came from the East to see and to worship the new-born King. We have nothing here symbolical of salvation. There is the guidance of the star, and there is worship and the

presentation of gifts, clearly indicating, in accordance with the Epistle for the day, the exalted character of the Gentile or Christian dispensation. We do not find fault with the Evangelical, who employs the Gospel narrative to represent the sinner's coming to Christ; but then he must allow that he does so merely in the way of accommodation, and he ought not to overlook what the Bible and the Church intend him to learn from it. Through God's mercy it is comparatively an easy matter to obtain salvation from the wrath of God and the tyranny of sin. If there be an honest and an earnest seeking for mercy, the very chiefest of sinners will soon find it. It is altogether a different matter to realize Christ as our King, and so bring every thought into subjection to the law of Christ. The leaving all, the denying of self, and the taking up of the cross, which are the conditions of discipleship, are here plainly shadowed forth. The Magi left their country, their families, and their occupations; they travelled through the dreary and dangerous deserts of Arabia Petræa, and that, too, in the most inclement season of the year; and they brought with them gold, frankincense and myrrh, as fitting gifts for the New-born King. The light of Christ as a Saviour, which we possess in veriest fulness, seems to be prophetically indicated in the manner in which His advent is announced. The angelic

choir proclaim the good tidings of great joy to all men. But it can only be said that we have had *the starlight of Christianity* throughout the dispensation, with the promise that "at evening time it shall be light." It is true that the Sun of Righteousness has arisen; but, alas, how few have there ever been who have seen His light, and who have walked in it! The Church, like the moon, ought to reflect the light of Christ, and it does so in some sense and measure; but it is almost always on the wane, and it is most frequently obscured by clouds. The stars at the beginning were exceedingly brilliant, and we have had stars of greater or less magnitude in every age of the Church; still, Christ has only been gathering out of the nations a people for His name, distinguished as witnesses for and examples of pure Christianity; and the time is yet to come when a "King shall reign in righteousness, and Princes shall rule in judgment." It would be a great matter if the religious mind of the day could only be brought to aim at the Church's standard of holiness. Thus in the present instance the Epistle for the day calls our attention to "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and "the fellowship of the mystery" made known unto us, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, and which is declared to be "CHRIST IN US, the hope of glory." If we follow the guidance of those who,

through faith and patience inherit the promises, we shall assuredly find the King whom we seek to worship; we shall discern Him under the hidings of His humiliation; and He will not look with disdain upon our poor gifts. For the righteousness and love we have to offer are the fruits of His own vine; our devotions and thanksgivings, the incense of His own inspiring; and our tears and mortifications, the effect of the planting into His own death. The first fruits of the Gentiles—the Magi, the centurion, the Syro-phœnecian woman evinced a true unselfish nobility of soul; why should the gold become dim or the much fine gold be changed? In the teaching for the day the three great manifestations of Christ are presented to us to be commemorated; first, His manifestation to the Gentiles by a star, called the Epiphany; then, His manifestation as the Son of God at His baptism, called the Theophany; and lastly, His manifestation as the God of all power and might, by turning the water into wine, called the Bethphany, or the manifestation in the house; these, we may say, are the general heads under which His several manifestations are classified.

On the First Sunday in the Epiphany, we have THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE. At twelve years of age, when the youth of Israel came under the obedience of the law, Jesus makes

his appearance in the Temple. In Him was all wisdom and all knowledge, yet He takes the place of a learner, and in doing so He was about His Father's business; for to teach us to become learners is the most difficult, and yet the most needful of all achievements, and therefore Jesus gives us His first great lesson by becoming a learner Himself. He always does His Father's business in the right place, in the right order, and in the right way. For the first time we hear the words "my Father" addressed to God; and if God be our Father, like Christ we should ever be about our Father's business. We have had a lesson on the consecration of the season of infancy, and on the importance of godly nurture, and now we have the devotion of youth to the service of God. Blessed be God! Christ is still in the midst of the doctors hearing and asking questions. In the Epistle for the day He calls upon our youth to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service; to renounce all conformity to the world, and to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. But then there must be humility as well as purity and devotedness, and they are therefore exhorted to take the place and work assigned them, and not to think of themselves more highly than

they ought to think; that they may really do their Father's business, and not follow their own will, or seek their own exaltation. Then we are cautioned in the Lessons for the day to keep our hearts with all diligence, for the land is full of idols, and to guard against distractions and neglect, lest we should travel a whole day's journey without being conscious of the absence of Jesus. And lastly, we have the example of Joseph and Mary, that should He withdraw His presence, we must seek Him sorrowing until we find Him.

On the Second Sunday of the Epiphany comes THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST AS THE PEACEMAKER AND THE PEACEGIVER. In the first proper Lesson we have the glorious promise that "the Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." In the second proper Lesson, our Peacemaker is most affectingly placed before us as making our peace by the sacrifice of Himself. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." In the short Epistle we have directions for insuring the peace of the Church. Each is exhorted to exercise his own proper gift, and all "to be kindly affectioned one to another

with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;" to be "instant in prayer," and "patient in tribulation," to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep," to be of the same mind one towards another, and not to mind "high things" but to "condescend to men of low estate." In the Gospel Christ is manifested as the Peacemaker in the family. He is invited to the marriage, where He performs His first miracle. Marriage is honourable in all, and yet until two wills become as one (and it is not always desirable that they should be entirely as one) there will be occasionally less or more of family discord. Besides there must be provision for necessary wants; and to be "careful for nothing," argues a high state of Christian advancement. Then there is the predicted inheritance of "trouble in the flesh;" sickness and sorrow cannot be warded off; the time must come when chair after chair will stand without its occupant, and when the lesson is at last learned that this is not the place of our rest. The time and the place of the first miracle of Jesus were therefore most lovingly chosen. His presence never fails to turn the water into wine. He maketh our wants the occasions for His supplies, and our trials and griefs and sorrows His means of discipline and the harbingers of His Divine consolations. The Collect is in perfect keeping with the teaching for the day:

"Almighty and everlasting God, *who dost govern all things in heaven and earth;* Mercifully hear the supplications of Thy people, and grant us *Thy peace* all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

On the Third Sunday in the Epiphany, JESUS IS MANIFESTED AS THE CLEANSER OF THE LEPER AND THE HEALER OF THE SICK. The first Lesson is the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Here we have the great change indicated after which the converted ought to aspire, and which regeneration alone can produce. We are called unto holiness, and we are exhorted to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might"; but, alas, notwithstanding our privileges and high calling, how great are the infirmities, and how many are the diseases of the converted soul! It is a great mercy when incipient backsliders come unto Jesus to be healed, instead of forsaking Him, because they are diseased. The leprous were cast out of

the synagogue because they were unclean, but it is a sense of their uncleanness which commends them to the compassion of Christ; and to the cry of faith, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," there is ever the ready answer, "I will, be thou clean." But the Gospel for the day is not only an encouragement to diseased souls, it also gives us an assurance that when we go to Christ on behalf of others we shall not make our petitions in vain. The noble Centurion—the first fruit of the Gentiles—the type of a generous and loving master, unselfish even in the motives that bring him to Christ, exemplifies a faith and conduct which is held up for our imitation. His servant is sick of the palsy; and he first sends a messenger, and then goes himself to Jesus. If Christ is the friend of sinners, what must be His love for the noble-minded and the generous! "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." Jesus saith unto Him, "I will come and heal him." "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." "When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, 'Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.'" In the Epistle we are directed in the way of peace and holiness, that we may enjoy the blessedness of spiritual health; and

the second Lesson for the day gives us similar godly counsel; while it also evidently points to the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, because of their unfaithfulness to their privileges.

On the Fourth Sunday in the Epiphany the Gospel MANIFESTS CHRIST AS THE ALMIGHTY OVER-RULER IN THE WORLD, whom the winds and the seas obey, and who casteth out devils, although their name and their number be legion. The passage across the lake is a figure of the Christian life. We leave all and set out in our voyage with Christ. In the sea of this world we are sure to meet with tempests—the trials of the children of God—fightings without and fears within—Christ delaying His succour—Christ awoke by prayer—His rebuking of the fearful, *first*; and then, His rebuking of the winds and the waves—after the storm the great calm. But although we may safely trust in the protection of Jesus, midst all storms and commotions —the ragings of the sea and the madness of the people—we are cautioned in the Epistle against provoking the opposition of the world. We are exhorted to be subject to the higher powers, for the powers that be are ordained of God, and even the officers of the civil power are the ministers of God. Therefore "we must render unto all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."

The Gospel moreover tells us that the natural man is under the influence of the powers of darkness, and that the best education will not allure him from his dwellings in the midst of spiritual death, or prevent him from madly destroying his soul; but the Seeker to save is ever and again passing by in saving power, and although He may be approached with fear and trembling, as if He were a tormentor instead of a Saviour, yet fears and tremblings prepare the way for that faith of which they are frequently the harbingers; and the greater the need the more speedy will be the deliverance. The devils are permitted to vex the worldly Gadarenes, by destroying their herds of swine. The destruction of the swine teaches us that uncleanness leads to speedy and inevitable ruin; and our Lord's refusal to allow the dispossessed demoniac to follow Him reminds us that we are not our own, and therefore even in doing good it must be done in His way, and not in that of our own devising. The Lessons are in the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth chapters of Isaiah, "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near; but the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest. There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked." The Collect is in keeping with the teaching for the day, "O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the

frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

On the Fifth Sunday in the Epiphany the Gospel MANIFESTS CHRIST AS THE MASTER OF THE HOUSEHOLD, who sows the good seed in His field. But while men sleep the enemy is most awake, and industriously propagates false doctrines, resembling the true, which generate false professors and every form of pseudo-Christianity. The tares, darnel, or bastard wheat, resemble the good seed, they are therefore to be allowed to grow together with the wheat until the time of harvest. They do not symbolize "damnable heresies," such as "denying the Lord that bought us," but heresies which contain a mixture of truth and error, and produce the semblance of piety instead of vital godliness. The command, "Let both grow together until the harvest," gives no sanction to laxity of discipline. It is merely an intimation that an injudicious zeal to eradicate existing evil would be injurious instead of helpful to the cause of God. The parable of the sower, which is descriptive of the general preaching of the Word and its results, is immediately followed by this parable of the householder, the connection of the two clearly indicating the distinction between the Spiritual and the Regenerate life. St. Paul

says to the Corinthians, "I have begotten you through the Gospel;" but here the sower of the good seed is *the Son of Man Himself*, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom—that is, He soweth Himself, and thus produces the children of the Kingdom. He Himself is the corn of wheat which falls into the ground and dies, and bringeth forth much fruit. (John xii. 24). The field is the world, for God hath given to His Son "the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." The world is to be made His field or Church by the sowing of Himself. A second sowing is clearly indicated by the circumstance of there being two parables. In the first parable the seed is sown on different kinds of soil, and only one is fruitful. In the second there is no unfruitful soil, but tares have been sown among the wheat, answering to spurious forms of Christianity. The enemy not only strives to prevent conversion work and to render it abortive, but he also counterfeits the regenerate life; for such is Asceticism and Church truth rested in, without spiritual vitality. In the Epistle we have the following directions given us for the right government of our spirit and the regulation of our conduct, because of this mixed condition of the Church in the world: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind,

meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called *in one body;* and be ye thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." The Lessons are again taken from Isaiah. In that for the morning service the most fearful and touching description is given us of the corrupt and degenerate state of the Church: Truly our iniquities have separated between us and our God, and He hath hid His face from us; "We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places like dead men." Towards the end of the chapter, our souls are cheered by the promise of the coming of the Lord, "When the arm of the Lord which bringeth salvation shall be revealed; for the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." And in the Lesson

for the evening there is the cry from those who love and wait for His appearing: "O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence." In the Collect we pray thus, "O Lord, we beseech Thee to keep Thy Church and household continually in Thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by Thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the Gospel of the sixth and last Sunday in the Epiphany, OUR LORD IS MANIFESTED AS THE PROPHET OF HIS OWN SECOND ADVENT; or, we may rather say that we have, in anticipation, a manifestation of our Lord in His second Advent in power and great glory, when He will call upon His household to give an account of their stewardship. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven: and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season. Blessed is

that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing." The Epistle is taken from the third chapter of the first Epistle of St. John, wherein the character of those who are born of God is described. It is only in this Epistle that the terms "born of God," and "begotten of God," are to be found, and they are applicable to none but Christ and the regenerate. We are all the sons of God by creation. The baptized are the adopted children of the Christian Covenant, just as the circumcised were God's children, because they were admitted into the Covenant of Circumcision. The converted or justified are born of the Spirit, are God's children by adoption and grace, and actually possess the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, "Abba, Father." But the regenerate—they that are begotten and born of God—have a higher order of Sonship, and are actually, in their measure, partakers of the Divine nature, Christ being born in them and formed in them, so that they are, in very deed, the brethren of Christ, who is "the First-born of many brethren," bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, and spirit of His spirit; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, who shall not be merely the subjects of His Kingdom, but who shall sit with Him on His throne in the eternal Kingdom of the Father. This highest and most glorious of all sonships is thus indicated in the first chapter of the

Gospel by St. John: "As many as received Him," (doubtless as their Saviour, for this is the first necessity,) "to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is, as I have previously said, a very trifling with the Word of God, to allege that the following description is applicable either to a baptized child or a converted man, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Eternal life is the reward of faithfulness to grace, and this life is in God's Son. But Christ, who is Eternal Life, is now, even in this world, the life of the regenerate; and "he that hath the Son hath this life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not this life." If, after being saved by grace, we strive to win Christ, as St. Paul strove to win Him (and strove not in vain) then we also shall obtain the prize, even Complete Union with Christ or Eternal Life, and be able to say with him, when the hour of our departure cometh, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, *the Righteous Judge*, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." The pos-

session of eternal life, the reward of faithfulness to grace, and yet the gift of God in His Son, constitutes the believer a saint; and, as we are called to be saints, the Church does well in placing this high state before us at the end of the Epiphany, and coupling it with the prediction of that second Advent in which the returning LORD will be *glorified* in His saints, and *admired* in all them that believe. Throughout the Word, God has given the two orders the respective names of saints and believers, and we only ignore our high calling when we confuse them with each other. The Collect, as usual, is in perfect keeping with the teaching for the day: "O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of Eternal Life; Grant us, we beseech Thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure; that, when He shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom; where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end."

I have a strong conviction that Evangelicals and Nonconformists know very little about the Church's teaching, and I am therefore giving this short and very imperfect outline that their attention may be attracted to it, that some conception may be formed

of the height and depth of Divine truth, which the Prayer Book so lucidly expounds, and that the beauty and order in which it is exhibited may be discerned. The exhibition of light is a more convincing appeal to an honest and thoughtful mind than a thousand arguments, and because it is so, I entreat your thoughtful perusal of a few more outlines, which it is a pleasure to me to submit to your consideration. It is not likely that your attention has been directed to such matters, whereas, as a Churchman, they have been continually before me and pressed upon my observation; and therefore I am sure you will not account me presumptuous in taking the place of a teacher, when the Prayer Book is the subject of our exposition.

After the manifestation of Christ, the preparation for the regenerate life is the great subject which the Church brings before us. The three Sundays which follow the Epiphany are called, respectively, Sundays in Septuagesima, in Sexagesima, and in Quinquagesima, to mark their proximity to the high festival of Easter. The season is semi-penitential, and the teaching is a wonderful prelude to the great spring or Lenten fast. On Septuagesima Sunday our attention is awakened to the slothful condition of believers. The Collect is penitential, and there is a cry for deliverance from the effects of unfaithfulness. That state of soul is indicated,

(alas, too general,) in which there is a deep consciousness of unfaithfulness and an earnest desire both to work for God and to make advancement in the Divine life; and yet, what to do, where, or how to begin, is felt to be the difficulty. There are times when all true believers feel that they ought to be working for God, and that greater progress in the Christian life ought to be made than has been made. Their case, *in reference to work*, is represented in the Gospel by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. Christ, as the householder, calls unto them through His Church, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" And then comes the command, "Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you." The Epistle speaks to them; *with regard to the state of their own souls*, in the stirring words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." As the regenerate life and regeneration work is the great subject that is now being entered upon, the Lessons return from Isaiah to the first chapter of Genesis, where we have the detailed account of the first generation or creation, which is the type of the regeneration. Those who hope to obtain the prize of our high calling must be temperate in all things, and follow the example of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who thus farther addresses us in the

Epistle, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away." Then, mark the contrast so beautifully set forth between the efforts arising from love for the prize of our high calling, which is union with Christ, and the selfish working for hire which is evinced by some of the labourers in the vineyard. The penny must not be mistaken for the prize; it is merely the temporal provision for the sustenance of the labourer—the success which God always gives as the legitimate hire of those who work for Him; and perhaps there is nothing in which there is greater equality, on the whole, or by which, generally speaking, greater envying is excited. It is simply the fact that the incipient zeal of the new beginner, who is called at a later period of the dispensation, and sometimes later in life, is often rewarded with greater success than the persevering efforts of those who have borne the burden and heat of the day. And how frequently arises from this the murmuring which is here so justly reprehended. The miserable perversion of this parable, when it is made to lend its sanction to death-bed repentances, cannot be too strongly condemned.

On the Sunday in Sexagesima the first Lesson is

the third Chapter of Genesis, wherein we have an account of the fall; and the second Lesson is the sixth chapter of Genesis, which gives us an account of the flood. The degrading effects and just punishment of sin are thus strikingly brought before us. We are led from the first promise of grace, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, to the remedial economy in actual operation by the foolishness of preaching, for the Gospel of the day is the parable of the sower. Here we are emphatically told, that we may have been converted and continue to be believers, making a profession of religion with some degree of consistency, and yet bring forth no fruits of righteousness. The first class of converts is always to be found in abundance in every religious movement. The seed is good, and the blade is actually a blade of wheat, but there is no depth of soil. The heart has never been thoroughly broken up by a true repentance, the Word is indeed received with joy, the converts endure for a while, but *because there is no deepness of earth,* in time of temptation they fall away. The second class of converts comprises, it is to be feared, very many who have a certain amount of faith and spiritual life, and yet who bring no fruit to perfection. There is sufficient deepness of soil, and there is not merely the blade, but also the stalk and the empty ear, and these too abide instead

of withering away. The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, are effectual preventives to fruit-bearing. This receiving of the grace of God in vain resembles the case of the unprofitable servant, who buried his talent in the earth. The third class consists of the "faithful brethren in Christ Jesus" who have "honest and good" hearts; and who bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. In the epistle, St. Paul is set before us as an exemplification of the seed sown on good ground—of the honest and good heart where there has been progression from justification to regeneration. Here is a man who could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" and who yet concludes a marvellous summary of His labours and sufferings with the self-abasing declaration, "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." In the same spirit there is in the Collect a disclaiming of all trust in self, which conscious inability to do anything as of ourselves, is the great characteristic of the regenerate man.

But on the sunday in Quinquagesima we have a more glorious portraiture of unselfishness and self-sacrifice than that of St. Paul. "Jesus took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by

the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spitted on; and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death." But now, as on the night of His agony, and as when expiring on the cross, His own sorrows and sufferings only deepen his sympathies for the sorrows and sufferings of others. Neither Bartimæus nor Zacchæus must be passed by, and His labours and instructions are multiplied, that He may finish the work which His love for us and His obedience to His Father's will constrains Him to do. The Epistle is that beautiful chapter on charity, (1 Cor. xiii.) wherein the spirit or life-principle, so to speak, of the regenerate is so incomparably described; and the Lessons are the establishing the covenant with Noah and the call of Abraham. May we not say,—Whence is this wisdom? Cometh it not from above?

We come now to the penitential season of Lent, when we "sow in tears" that we may "reap in joy." The course of teaching is in the same beautiful order, and of the same highly edifying character. Our Lord is brought before us, by the Gospels for the season, in the different prominent stages of His humiliation as our great Exemplar, and to deepen in our hearts the love for Himself and for His name. He is presented to us, *under His temptation*, to teach

us how to overcome "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." By the perverse opposition of those to whom He was sent *He is driven into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;* but there He is consoled by the cry of the Syro-phœnician woman, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," and finds a work of mercy to perform. *He is accused of casting out devils by Beelzebub,* the chief of the devils; but He calmly puts to silence His calumniators by showing them the absurdity of their accusation, for if Satan were divided against Satan, how could his kingdom stand? *He retires into the wilderness for necessary repose,* but the necessities of the multitudes that followed Him make Him forgetful of His weariness, and He feeds the five thousand. Again, *He is accused of having a devil,* and He meekly replied, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that He is your God." *And then we have His betrayal,* and we all know how touchingly He endeavoured to melt the betrayer. The concluding Epistle might answer for the whole, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," etc. In the course of this season of humiliation we have two very remarkable festivals. The first is that of Matthias, who was chosen in the place of Judas. Here we have the solemn voice of warning. The second is

the festival of the Annunciation, indicative of the glorious truth, that when we are in the depths of humiliation, then it is that Christ is conceived in us, and that the true regenerate life has its *actual* commencement.

We shall not enter upon the passion and crucifixion of our blessed Lord, because we could not do so without dwelling upon it; and although the subject is never out of season, yet it had now best be left to our private meditation. Through God's mercy, neither of us belong to the "passers-by." May neither of us be of the company of His timid followers, who stood looking on afar off. But may our place be with John and the Marys, at the foot of the Cross.

On Easter Eve we are buried with Him. On Easter morn we have our Risen Lord. And while the Gospel invites us to be early at the sepulchre, and to wait until we see Him, the Epistle reminds us that, as we are risen with Him, we must set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. During the forty days we have Christ's different appearings to His disciples; and as we have not the record of the things which He spake concerning His kingdom, the Church brings Him before us as the Good Shepherd, and rehearses much of His last sermon prior to His agony and crucifixion, where He speaks of the mis-

sion of the Comforter, and of His going away that He might return and abide with us; while the Epistles are full of instructions bearing upon the interior life of the regenerate. Then we have our Lord's Ascension; the descent of the Holy Ghost; and the festival of the adorable Trinity, when "a door is opened in heaven;" we are exhorted to realize, as far as we may, the sum and substance of present and everlasting blessedness, which consists in present fellowship and eternal union with the Father, and with the Son, and with the Holy Spirit of God.

My dear brother, I have been trying to shew you some of the glories of our Father's house, which is "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I have given you, *currente calamo*, the merest outline of her teaching for the first division of the Christian year. The second part consists of expositions, instructions, and directions, all bearing more or less directly on the interior or regenerate life. The Nonconformist by separating from the Church, and the Evangelical by constructing a system of his own within the Church, have shut themselves out from, and blinded their eyes to, this glorious exhibition and exposition of Christian truth. I am free to confess that while Churchmen see this teaching, and are God's witnesses to it, too many of them, alas, have very imperfect concep-

tions of the regenerate life; and this must necessarily be the case, so long as they are ignorant of the saving power of justification by faith. Still, the piety which they have (for very many unconverted Churchmen have a certain kind of piety) is of the Christian type; legal of course, it must be; but, let it be remembered that its legality is *not* the only thing which distinguishes it from the piety of the Nonconformist and the Evangelical. They fast forty days, because Christ fasted forty days. They regard the Cross as the symbol of Christianity. It is not to them merely the instrument of our Saviour's sufferings and death, but the emblem of self-crucifixion—of the daily cross which they must take up if they would be the followers of Jesus. They see self with singular clearness, and therefore they understand the meaning of the precept—Deny thyself. They see holiness, and are consequently reverential; and they are trying to attain to it in their own way. They understand also what is meant by worship, and they would not consider that they had done their duty if they did not offer up a service of worship unto God. They have wrong views, it is true, of the Sacrament of Baptism, but their very error is in the right direction, if I may so express it. They hope to obtain the grace of justification by partaking of the Holy Communion; but still, somehow, they imagine that they receive

Christ, and that by receiving Him they are more and more justified. Their conceptions are just such as we might expect unconverted men to entertain, who adhere to the letter of the word, and whose minds are so far enlightened by the teaching of the Church. Their whole system of externalism has reference to Christ, and is a certain kind of acknowledgment that Christ is to be represented by His Church; that He is given to us through His Church; and that it is the Church's proper work and duty to manifest and to uphold His truth. In short, the Church is to them *the kingdom and body of Christ*, and they account themselves the subjects of His kingdom, the members of His body. All this would become at once right and real, if they were made spiritually alive to God by the saving reception of justification through faith; nor is it unreal, because it is not livingly exemplified. The Church is still the pillar and ground of the truth, and God's witness for Christianity. The Church and Christianity are inseparable, and cannot and do not exist apart from each other. Nonconformists and Evangelicals may, in individual cases, have a measure of the Christian spirit, and may recognize, in some small degree, the obligations of Christian precepts, that is, they may be better than their systems; but when the doctrine of justification by faith is made the foundation and central truth of a system, it

becomes the substitute for Christianity, and it never did, and it never will produce Christianity. On the contrary, this very doctrine, when thus exalted to a false position will tend to the ignoring of Christianity, both in the theory and practice, as the adherents of such a system must remain blind to the very nature and objects of their high calling. This is the true state of the case, however painful it may be to me to make such a statement, and however offensive it may be to the evangelical mind to hear it made. I have felt all along, and I now see as clearly as in the light of noon-day, that the restoration of Christian unity depends upon the recognition and acceptance of Christianity by Nonconformists and Evangelicals. The moment the light of Christianity breaks in upon the mind, separation from the Church becomes an impossibility, and Evangelicalism ceases to be a system; for we at once discern it to be our call and our duty to revive spirituality within the institute of Christ. We see it our high privilege and glory to be united to the body of Christ, and thus to have true fellowship with Him in His sufferings. And however many and great our trials and difficulties may be, because of existing corruptions, still, self-sacrifice is the Christlike demand which is made upon us by the will of God. I am not theorising. All this I have experienced. Twenty-eight years ago, when

my mind was so deeply exercised about my own position, that but for God's merciful upholding, it would have broken down; when month after month I had cried unto God, almost without intermission, to make known to me His will, and to lead me to discover His holy Church, the body of Christ, that I might become united to it, whatever sacrifices such an union might entail, the Word of the Lord came unto me with a power not to be mistaken, and never to be forgotten: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." In a moment it was given me to see the Church as a mixed body, containing within itself both good and bad, both wheat and tares, wise and foolish virgins, as clearly, though not so fully, as I see it now. God's Word; God's will; God's way; God's Institute, were everything to me. My whole mind was revolutionized by a light far too effulgent to be my own, or of man; and self, under whose domination I had so long unconsciously lived, received through God's grace its first death-blow. Do not let us deceive ourselves; the great thing which requires to be done is nothing less than this, to take whole religious communities from under the domination of self, by discovering to them the will and the loving and gracious purposes of God. But is such a thing possible? Was ever such a thing heard of in the whole history of the world? Nothing

is impossible with God. And if the Christian dispensation is not to go out in apostacy, like the dispensation which preceded it—if there is to be a remnant to whom the restoration of the Jew will be an accession of light, of blessedness and of glory, like a resurrection from the dead—if, indeed, this highly favoured country is to be saved from the revival of Popery, and a fearful over-spreading of infidelity and irreligion, and to become God's instrumentality in the last days for evangelizing the world, I can and shall hope, believe, and pray that this new thing may be done; for, blessed be His name, nothing is too hard for God, and nothing is too much for faith to expect.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER VIII.

Truths and Facts which demand Consideration.

MY DEAR SIR,

If nothing else has been done by this exposition, at least two things have been made very apparent; first, you can hardly fail to see, very clearly, that an alteration of the baptismal office

such as Revisionists are seeking to obtain, would amount to the removal of the foundation of the Church, and to the repudiation of Christianity; for, the Church is built upon Christ, not as a Saviour merely, but as our New Covenant; and Christ, as our New Covenant, is the root and branch of Christianity. You may say this is the Church's theory, and that you reject it altogether; but even then you must allow, that if baptismal regeneration were expunged from the baptismal office the foundation of the theory would be taken away, and the whole fabric would inevitably fall to the ground. Consequently, such a revision of the Prayer Book as is sought for would only lead to a separation of Church and State; for, assuredly, in this matter, the Church would not submit to the dictation of the State, but would continue to be God's witness for Christianity, whatever trials it might have to encounter, until the end of the dispensation. The second thing which has been made manifest is this, that Nonconformists and Evangelicals are only beating the air when they contend with unconverted Churchmen about sacramental grace. It is the duty of converted men to lead the unconverted to God, and this will never be done by arguing with them, and that, too, upon very false grounds. The real ground of contention, if contention there still must be, lies in this, and is sufficiently patent to them, that

Evangelicalism, in any and in every form, is not Christianity, but only a preparation for it; and that by ignoring or repudiating the Church, Evangelicals ignore and repudiate God's appointed means for effecting regeneration, and, so far, Christianity itself. True Christianity and actual regeneration are one, and none but the regenerate are Christians indeed; and all may see that, to confound justification with regeneration, or to mistake the one for the other, is the veriest trifling with revealed Truth, and with the two great and glorious realities, both of which, as professing Christians, we ought to possess. To narrow the ground of all future disputations then, it may simply be stated, and the point ought to be adhered to, that "we in Christ," is one thing, and "Christ in us," is another. That *we are in Christ* for justification, and that *Christ in us* is our regeneration. For here is the very root of all our doctrinal differences. Between enlightened men who are not contentious, but lovers of the truth, there can be no real cause of difference but upon this one point. I mean to say, that a difference upon this one point is the cause of all their other differences; and when it is once discerned that our being born of the Spirit, (or restored to spiritual life,) our being forgiven and accepted, (and each of these results of Christ's remedial work have their place at our justification,) constitute only the pre-

paration for the daily dying of the Old Man, that the life and nature of the New Man, the second Adam, who is God-man, may be communicated to us, or, in scriptural language, that Christ may become our life and be formed in us; then all our disputations, and discussions, and differences, will be for ever at an end. The evil has its seat and ruling power within, and it is only by the grace of God, and the loving reception of His truth which maketh free, that we can be delivered from it. We want a revival of Christianity, and if this want were felt there would soon be the restoration of Christian unity.

And may we not hope for a revival of Christianity? and may we not unite in praying for it? This would, at least, be more like professing Christians than fighting against and trying to devour each other. Blessed be God, we have a revival of conversion-work in our day, such, I am persuaded, as has not taken place since the days of the Apostles; and we have every reason to hope that it will extend to every parish throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is a striking fact, that while we hear complaints of a decrease of candidates for the ministry, some of our nobility, and many laymen, both in the higher and lower social positions, in various parts of the kingdom, have not only received evangelical truth in saving-power, but

are nobly and successfully devoting themselves to evangelizing-work. But while I marvel and rejoice at the Lord's work, for truly it is marvellous in our eyes, yet I rejoice with trembling. It is not that I regard the outcry about enthusiasm and excitement, neither can the common arguments against evangelizing-work have any weight with me. It is quite true that many of the converts soon fall away, and that their last state is worse than the first. So it was in the days of Elijah, and in the revivals of religion in the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. Our Lord has forewarned us that there will be stony ground and thorny ground conversions, and that the honest and good heart will only be one among the many. Out of the ten lepers that were cleansed, only one returned to give glory unto God; and St. Paul, the greatest of Evangelists, had to make the sorrowful admission, "All they which are in Asia have turned away from me." We need not, therefore, be distressed about the objections of unconverted men against evangelizing-work, nor indeed of many who profess to be converted—of whom better things might have been expected. It is indeed to be lamented, that awakened sinners are not always judiciously dealt with, for both judgment and experience are required to deal with them effectively, and for the want of such treatment there is a proportional increase in the number of

those who fall away. There is too often a great lack of wisdom shewn, in the absence of any attempt to control sympathetic emotion, which might be rendered serviceable to the work, whereas, when unduly encouraged, it must mar it. But what we have chiefly to dread is this: the Evangelists of the present day are generally men of one truth; there is far too much of exciting the feelings, and far too little of dealing with the conscience; the consequence is, there is no deep conviction of sin, and little breaking up of the heart by a thorough repentance before the penitent is directed to look to Christ for salvation; and this will account for very much of the backsliding which brings reproach upon religious movements. Worst of all, conversion is spoken of by too many of our Evangelists as the all in all of religion. It is not, "be converted and become as little children," but, "be converted and you will be great saints;" the popular hymn is, "Only believe, and yours is heaven." It is not an objector to evangelizing-work, but an old Evangelist, who thus speaks. There will always be less or more of solid work in every religious movement; because, in every locality, there are always some souls who are yielding, more or less, to the Spirits' action upon them, and an earnest appeal, or a fervent prayer-meeting, may bring them to the point of decision;

and in all such cases the work will be genuine, whatever the instrumentality may happen to be. But, as a general rule, where there is not an effectual dealing with the conscience, the work will be sympathetic and ephemeral. I may also add, that the more there is of deep solemnity, the more will there be of the power of God; the less of mere sympathetic emotion, the more genuine will be the conversion, and the more hopeful the after-conduct of the convert. Now, because this is a day of merciful and gracious visitation—because in many localities sinners have been flocking to Christ "as doves to their windows"—because evangelizing-work is beginning to be understood, and is laying hold of the religious mind of the day, the nurture of the converts is, to me, a subject of the deepest and most anxious concern. O that they could be brought under the teaching of the Church. O that conversion might be followed by Christianity. We have had far too much of religious selfishness, of antinomianism, and religious sentimentality, and of the unholy mixture and confusion of religion with the world; and may God keep far from us a religion without a morality! The revival of pure scriptural self-denying, self-sacrificing, world-renouncing Christianity, in the spirit and after the example of Christ, is the only remedy for existing evils, and the only prevention of evils that are looming in the distance.

On either hand there is an instrumentality perfectly adequate, under God's blessing, for such a work. If Churchmen would only receive the doctrine of justification in saving power, instead of barely acknowledging it in the letter; or if it should please God to open the eyes of Nonconformists and Evangelicals to see the Church—in either case, the Sun of righteousness would shine forth with healing in His wings; Christianity would take the place of a disputatious and divisive religionism; the life of Christ would be manifested in His living members; our young converts would "go forth and grow up as calves of the stall;" and "the ends of the earth would see the salvation of our God."

I confess that my hopes of seeing brighter days for the Church are often damped by apprehensions of coming evil, and by occurrences which certainly do not indicate extension of spiritual vitality. Nevertheless, I do rejoice, and will rejoice, that evangelizing-work is greatly and steadily on the increase, and that high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, are bearing their grateful testimony to the blessed truth, that whosoever believeth in Jesus receiveth remission of sins. But O, how long has even this saving truth been in winning its way to anything which could be termed a general acceptance! and how strongly is it yet opposed by the generality of Churchmen! although they cannot

but perceive that by rejecting it they are giving daily increasing power to dissent. You may easily conceive how painful a thing it is to me to see the Church numerically weakened, and spiritual death perpetuated within her, by her children's blind antipathy to saving truth. Still, God will never leave Himself without a witness in regard to Church truth, on which the existence of Christianity depends; and, having this confidence, it is my fervent daily prayer that, in the Church or out of the Church, the number of Evangelists may be increased a thousandfold, for salvation is the first—the great necessity.

What may be the position and condition of the Church ten years hence no man can foresee, and it would be the veriest folly to attempt to predict. If an effective evangelizing agency were constituted in any one diocese under an evangelical bishop, who would not merely sanction the work, but throw himself heartily into it, the extension of the Church in respect to numbers would be so great, and its spiritual influence would be so powerfully felt and generally acknowledged, that the example would be extensively followed in other dioceses with or without episcopal sanction; and this alone would insure the Church's supremacy both in the nation and in the affections of the people. The writer in the *Edinburgh Review* says, "That an ancient established ecclesiastical system has unparalleled

opportunities for exerting an attraction for the practical purposes of comprehension, if it will but use them wisely, frankly, and generously. In the eyes of the vast majority (in most counties) it has claims on their respect and veneration which they cannot fail to admit. The great mass of educated men regard a National Church, as an inheritance transmitted to them from past ages, as an instrument well adapted for effecting a sacred and useful end. They feel that they are not left to decide an open question. Whether theoretically right or not, the Church is at any rate a deeply-rooted and cherished institution, which it would be mischievous to subvert, and which every consideration of justice and good policy persuades them to turn to the best possible account. Originated and preserved by the Providence of God, bound up with the whole course of the national history, intertwined with the laws and habits and language of the people, associated with every territorial division, actively present in every locality, and connected more or less with the personal experience of every individual, it is a mighty power existing in the land, the removal of which would amount to a disastrous revolution. The sternest champion of the Anti-State-Church theories would be cautious how he destroyed at once so large a portion of our social and political framework; while the great majority of statesmen and

citizens see in it a beneficent and invaluable instrument of good; for all the faults of which, as set forth by its bitterest opponents, the remedy is not abolition but reform."

All this is most true and well said. Of course I do not regard the Church merely as a national establishment; but this does not prevent me from giving my most hearty and grateful assent to every word of the extract; and in the following passage I go along with the writer in the same cordial spirit of sympathy. "But then, on the part of the Church itself, there must be a corresponding readiness to accept and discharge the duties of its vocation generously as well as faithfully. If it refuses to be expansive it ceases to be national. If it be unable or unwilling to obey the organic laws of the nation's spiritual development, the confession of such inability (on whatever plea it is excused or even justified) is, at any rate, an abdication of its *national* character,—an admission that its claims in this respect can be no longer maintained, or no longer at least in their exclusiveness."

That something must be done and will be done is very obvious to most thinking men, unless the age fall into a spirit of indifferentism with regard to religion; and I thank God that this was never less likely to be the case. I am very sure that any relaxation in the terms of subscription to the

Articles and Liturgy will not help us. Our loving God has made ample provision for all the Church's wants, and for all the wants of Nonconformists. The carnal mind and the divisive spirit have caused their separation, but God has brought good out of evil. A knowledge of Church Truth in the letter has not only been preserved, but wonderfully revived; Evangelical Truth has been not only witnessed to, but is powerfully operative; and the Spirit of unity, to whom we must look for help, is able to reunite them. This being done, we should have a National Church, which, by God's help and blessing, would be able to provide effective spiritual edification for the whole nation, and to undertake the too long neglected work of evangelizing the world. But there can be no sacrifice of truth. God will never permit it. Christian truth and the regenerate life Nonconformists will find in the Church and nowhere else; for the Church is the true and God-appointed expositor of the Bible, as far as Christianity is concerned; and this is what Nonconformists want, although they may be unconscious of their need. Evangelical truth and a fresh infusion of spiritual life is what the Church needs; and this is what Nonconformists can supply. From first to last I have written this exposition under a deep and unalterable conviction that it was the carnal mind

and the divisive spirit, as I have just said, which caused the separation, and it is only the carnal mind and the divisive spirit which prevents immediate reunion; at the same time there is much to be learned by both parties, and very much of prejudice to be overcome, and this cannot be the work of a day.

I suppose most men will admit that the Prayer Book is very far from being all that could be desired. It bears the mark of having been compiled in days of mourning, and under a sense of restriction. To the Litany and Offices this remark does not apply; for they are singularly, I would almost say, admirably perfect; but both the Morning and Evening Services might be greatly diversified and enriched without being lengthened. The sameness between the two services is an indication of poverty and restrictedness. Why might there not be a service which could be shortened or prolonged, according to circumstances, for every day in the week? And why should not extemporary prayer be properly authorized before and after the sermon? There could hardly be any other objection to such improvements beyond the fear that the work might not be done well. An increase of devotional ardour is what most spiritual men would desire; and a service which would not conduce to this end would be deservedly objectionable. For many reasons I would rather that evangelizing or conversion work

were done out of the Church fabric than in it; at all events, in the present state of the Church there should be no regular service on the Sunday evenings, but an evangelizing discourse with extemporary prayer before and after the sermon. When the work of the preacher is to awaken sinners, a service of worship is out of all order. That even the use of the Litany on such an occasion has been recommended, is only another evidence of how little the nature of evangelizing work is understood. The Evangelist prays for the people, and for help to deal with them effectively, and is not a leader of their devotions. But all these matters would soon find their own order, if evangelizing work were encouraged, and if the services of such men as know their work were duly authorised.

There would be no difficulty in putting everything right if we were only right ourselves. I would ask no man to do what I would not and could not do myself. For instance, I could not say that I might possibly be deceived as to the saving power of justification by faith, because my Bible tells me that we are justified by faith—because what the Bible says I have found by my own experience to be true—because my testimony has been received by thousands, and all who have received it have realized in their own experience the grace and saving power of justification—because there are

hundreds of thousands in this country, and hundreds of thousands in other countries, who are in the enjoyment of the same blessedness by the same means, and because I have never yet met with one single individual who has professed to be justified in any other way, in whom the distinctive characteristics of the state of justification were not most evidently wanting. I can, therefore, have no doubt that we are justified by faith, and that there is no other way by which a sinner can be justified. We cannot have exactly the same kind of evidence with regard to regeneration, and yet it is not one whit less convincing and satisfactory. In the first place, regeneration is not an act of which we can be conscious, like justification, but a growth from an unconscious beginning. In justification we can say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see;" I was dead, now I am alive; I was an unsaved sinner, now I have the knowledge of salvation by the remission of my sins; God has done what He said He would do, if I believed in my heart that Christ has made an atonement for my sins; for He has said, "He that believeth shall be saved;" I believed, and I am saved; and He also has said, "He that believeth hath the witness in Himself;" and I can say that the Spirit of God beareth witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. But, although in the case of regeneration we can have no such evidence, still we

are plainly told that God hath given Christ to us as our New Covenant—that He, as our second Adam, is a quickening Spirit—that we are baptized by the one Spirit into the one body, which is Christ's body —that we are baptized in the name of the adorable Trinity into Christ's death—that we are planted by Baptism in the likeness of Christ's Death and Resurrection—that as many as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ—that we are buried with Him by Baptism unto death. All this is explained by the Apostle, when he calls upon us to believe that these things have been done to us, and for us, and therefore we ought in faith to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ; just in the same way as He calls upon us to believe that Christ by dying for us made an atonement for our sins. Of course, if we do not believe that Christ died for us, by a faith of the heart and of God's giving, we cannot be saved; and if we do not believe that we are dead with Christ and risen with Christ, the power of dying to self and of living to God will never be ours. Besides, this great mystery of godliness can only be understood by the spiritual and the humble-minded scholar in the school of Christ; and the more assiduously we learn and obey, the more clearly do we discern the mystery. From first to last it is a matter of progress. Hence the Apostle tells us that, although he

had been baptized unto Christ's death, and reckoned himself dead and risen with Christ, yet he died daily, mortified his earthly affections, set his affections on things above, kept his body under and brought it into subjection, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in His body; and was always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in His mortal flesh; counting all things but dung that he might win Christ, by becoming conformable to his death; forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, and thus pressing "toward" the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Now to those whom God is enlightening to understand the mystery of godliness, which has been hid in God from the beginning of the world, and that is now revealed to us, which is *Christ in us* the hope of glory, all these sayings are a pure language which they easily understand. They see the high calling and purpose of God. They see that God has not only given Christ *for us, to save us from eternal death,* but that he has also given Him *to us, to be our life.* That as surely as we inherit the life and nature of the first Adam, so surely shall we receive the life and nature of the second Adam. To this end it is necessary that the life and nature

of the old man should die in us; hence the self-denying, self-sacrificing precepts of Christianity; and that as the old man dies, or is put off, so shall we be enabled by the Spirit to "put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness"; so that we may no longer live, but Christ may live in us. Hence, also, the first Christian Sacrament symbolizes the death of the old man by a typical burying, and the resurrection of the new man after the Image of Christ by a raising out of the grave of death; and the second Christian Sacrament symbolizes a reception of the Nature and Life of Christ, by our eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and is actually a means of communicating His life and nature to the worthy communicant. Now, to such persons as are striving to win Christ, whom the Spirit of God has enlightened to see their high calling, and who are conscious in themselves, notwithstanding their many and great unfaithfulnesses to the obedience of their calling, that the life of self and the power of the creaturely-will are dying within them, although, perhaps, not to the extent of their desire, and that the life of Christ is more and more longed after, and is in some small measure being imparted to them—I say, to such persons, the evidence of the reality of regeneration is just as clear and assured as the evidence of justification. And let me add, that

God has given to earnest-minded Churchmen, even although they be not converted, and although they do not fully understand the mystery of regeneration or of godliness, so clear a discernment of the doctrine by the letter of Scripture, and from the teaching of the Church through all the Fathers, and indeed from our most learned and conscientious Commentators and Divines of later date, that it is simply impossible for them to receive anything for Truth which does not accord with this teaching. Many high Churchmen have been converted to God under my own ministry, but their conversion has only led to the deeper apprehension and higher appreciation of Christian truth; and therefore the expectation is vain, if any such exists, of overturning the faith of the intelligent Churchman, and of giving him Evangelicalism in exchange.

I have all along made the distinction between Evangelical Truth and Evangelicalism, and perhaps I had better explain what I mean. I conceive that Evangelical Truth, or the Gospel of grace which bringeth salvation, may be expressed in the following words; Christ, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man, and has made an atonement for the sins of the whole world. Every repentant sinner, who, by a faith of God's giving to repentant sinners, believes this fact in his heart, and gives God glory for His redeeming love, (which he will do the

moment he really believes,) instantly receives from God, by the Spirit, a sense of forgiveness and acceptance, and the Spirit of adoption—the Spirit witnessing with his spirit that he is a child of God. Now, Jesus directed that these glad tidings should be published throughout the whole world in the form of a proclamation; and, let me say, that the more closely this direction is followed, the greater will be the success of the Gospel. When proclaimed in its simplicity, its true meaning is easily apprehended, and when men's minds have not been abused and thrown into confusion, by either a false or complicated Gospel, it is generally willingly and gladly received, and "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth it." What is emphatically and very properly called *the* Gospel may be gathered from its announcement, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, *which shall be to all people;* for unto you is born this day in the city of David A SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord." In the commission given by our Lord to His Apostles, we have first in the Gospel by St. Matthew the command to teach all nations as a preparation for baptizing them. Then, in the Gospel by St. Mark, the kind of teaching is thus explained, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And lastly, St. Luke thus fills up what was wanting, "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise

from the dead, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." The glad tidings, or the Gospel which is to be proclaimed, is one thing; the four Gospels, wherein the doctrines of Christianity are laid down and expounded by Christ, and where we see them exemplified in the life of Christ, are altogether distinct from this. The true Evangelist keeps to his proclamation. If he is well instructed, he first co-operates with the Spirit by striving to awaken the sinner, to convict him of sin, and to lead him to repentance; and then he makes his proclamation. How much conversion work has been done by simple-minded and unlearned men standing up before the people and telling them in all the confident earnestness of sincerity, how they themselves were great and wicked sinners—how they were awakened and cried to God for mercy—how they were directed to look to Jesus and to believe that He had died in their stead and made an atonement for all their sins—how they, by God's help, believed this blessed truth—and how they were filled with joy and peace in believing, and were enabled to cry aloud with St. Paul, "Who can condemn me? It is Christ that died!" Such preachers will not fail to assure their audiences, that if they will only seek for mercy they are sure to find it,—if they will only ask for pardon, they are sure to receive it,—if they will only believe

that Christ died for them, they are sure to obtain salvation. *But then they will urge them to do it now;*—for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" and "every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"; for whosoever cometh unto Jesus, He will in no wise cast out; "Although your sins be as scarlet," they will plead, "they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." Nor will they be behind the great apostle of the Gentiles in declaring to the gainsayers, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." How many thousands have been brought to the saving knowledge of the truth, and have received Christ as their Saviour by this simple and truly scriptural way of making the Gospel proclamation! And how many eloquent sermons have been preached after the evangelical fashion, which have not been the means of leading one soul to Christ? Now, I

believe in the proclamation, and have no sympathy whatever with the evangelical way of preaching the Gospel. What is the evangelical system? It consists of an exposition, demonstration, and illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith; of the moral law, somewhat spiritualized, and represented as the fruits of justification; of repentance, as being a necessary preparation for being born of the Spirit; and of all other subjects connected with or bearing upon religion, excepting regeneration, which is mistaken for the birth of the Spirit, or the restoration to spiritual life,—that is excepting Christianity for which is substituted the moral law spiritualized. And what is the general effect of this preaching of the Gospel as a system? The effect is simply this, the hearers are indoctrinated into evangelical views, without (excepting in individual cases) being converted to God. Nothing surprised me so much, after my own conversion, as the fact, that very many of those who held evangelical views were not only unconverted, but intensely legal, and lived in hopes of receiving the blessing of justification because they had been striving to serve God for many years. In Scotland, not many years ago, where the Gospel has been preached after the evangelical system, I may say almost universally and for centuries, it was the common belief that a sense of pardon and acceptance was only the privilege of the favoured

few, or of very aged saints. I thank God with a full heart that there is now a marvellous change in that country, and that the simple Gospel is being proclaimed in power almost in every parish; and may God grant that the same foolishness of preaching may soon be heard from every evangelical pulpit in our land. There are certainly two very marvellous things which Evangelicalism has long exhibited; the first is, that men should go to hear the Gospel, year after year, without the intention or purpose of believing it to the saving of their souls; and the other is, that those who have believed it go to Church and Chapel to hear the doctrine of justification explained, proved, or enforced. But this is the consequence of their holding up salvation as the great object and end of our probationary state. And there can be no alteration for the better so long as justification is mistaken for regeneration, and the moral law spiritualized, is substituted for Christianity.

Were I asked my opinion of the state of religion in this country at the present time, I should say, that, as far as I could form an estimate in a matter in which we are so liable to make mistakes, I had reason to believe that there never were so many converted persons throughout the land at any former period of our national history, but that very few have advanced beyond the first principles in religious knowledge; that there is little advance-

ment in the spiritual life; that there is only a very small number who have the light of Christianity, and who are exemplifying the Christian life. There is, I believe, a very considerable and general desire for deeper truth and advancement in holiness; there is also an incalculable amount of ignorance respecting religion, and actual indifferentism and profligacy; and wherever the Gospel has been preached, there is a very numerous class of persons who have been partially enlightened, who know that if they are not converted they must perish, but who are putting off their conversion to a dying bed; and the number of backsliders in heart, and openly, would very nearly equal the number of believers. There is much to be thankful for, much that is hopeful, and very much to be mourned over and deplored in this estimate; and of all there is the most to humble us in the fact, that while many have fled to Jesus for salvation, so very few have left all, denied themselves, taken up their cross, and followed Christ. Of this crying evil the cause is undeniably the substitution of salvation as an end, for our high calling of God in Christ; which makes our religion self-exalting, and self-satisfying instead of self-sacrificing, which is the very nature and essence of Christianity.

There must be a return to the order of Christ, which order the Church has followed, before we can can see really brighter and better days—before our

religion will possess the power of sacrificing self, overcoming the world, and manifesting the life of Christ. First, evangelize or convert, and then lead the converted to Christ the New Covenant, to Baptism, wherein we covenanted to die daily unto the life of the old Adam, through faith in the power of Christ's death, and by the help of the Spirit, and to live unto God by the power of Christ's Resurrection. We must acknowledge the truth and act upon it, that we are not sent into the world that we may be saved, and get to heaven when we die, but that we are sent into the world and saved, that we may be made like Christ, by a new creation or regeneration—that we may obtain the prize of the high calling of God, which is to be made partakers of the Divine nature, to receive eternal life through Christ dwelling in us, and to be eternally and perfectly united to Christ, as Christ is to the Father. If we have any object lower than this we shall never be able to understand what is the nature and purpose of Christianity; for Christianity is devised of God to accomplish this one great object; and if we lose sight of the object, we cannot fail to regard the means of attaining it as severe, repulsive, unnecessary, and altogether inconsistent with the loving-kindness of God. Thus we shall get away from all sense of obligation to obey the self-denying, flesh-mortifying, world-renouncing pre-

cepts of Christianity, by persuading ourselves that they cannot and do not really mean what the words imply.

I have no heart to come from so high, so glorious, so divine a subject to the consideration of the common objections which are made to the restoration of Christian unity; and yet, I suppose, this letter cannot well be concluded without some allusion to them. A certain class of Nonconformists make an outcry against the union of Church and State; would there be any outcry against it by men of intelligence if the nature of that union were in accordance with Christian principles? Surely the religious interests of a nation professing Christianity ought to be the first and most anxious concern of the State. Why not do what can be done to correct existing abuses, instead of attempting to unchristianize the nation? But then there are many different religious communities, and therefore it is not fair to give the National Church the exclusive support of the State. My answer is: Wherein the National Church is in fault, let Nonconformists do their endeavour to reform it, and they are sure to have God's help; but let them not perpetuate divisions in defiance of the declared will of God. Dissenters have just as good a right to the ministrations of the national Church as Churchmen, and it is their interest and duty to see to it, that the

Church is, in every respect, effective. Has any honest attempt been made in this direction? On the contrary, is it not the fact, that those who have separated themselves, or have been unjustly driven from the Church have ceased to regard it as a possible centre of unity, and have begun to consider their communities, not merely as religious associations which originated in, and owe their continuance to a real or supposed existing necessity, but as self-constituted churches, which ought to be countenanced as legitimate rivals of the National Church? Now is this in accordance with Christian principles? Is it not an actual repudiation of the order and declared will of God? Is it not an ignoring of the precept of Christ which enjoins unity? Is it not a setting at naught the injunction of the Holy Spirit, who places unity before us as an object which we are to follow after, and strive by every possible means to attain? Is it not an attempt to establish the principle of division, which is the creature of self-will and the glory of the divisive spirit, instead of that oneness into which we are baptized, and which it was one high purpose of the Church's institution to preserve, in order that we might be perfected in one? Division may be a necessary evil; nevertheless, an evil it always is, even when submitted to from necessity. It is an evil root, and although its operation may in some respects be beneficial, it is at

the same time always mischievous; that is to say, along with the benefit there is always the accompanying bane. It imparts, in a greater or less degree, its own spirit to every man who comes under its influence, whether he be in the state of nature or in the state of grace; and not only blinds the mind to the objects, requirements, and moral beauty of the principle of unity, but contracts the heart, so that even the man of piety becomes, in one respect, like the worldling, a mere lover of his own.

Far be it from me to wish or to attempt to shift the original guilt of division from the carnal mind within the Church, to those who saw it to be their duty to withdraw from it, or to those who at a later period were driven from it because their evangelizing labours could not be tolerated. I only point out that the position which they considered themselves bound to assume has, very naturally, led to the adoption of principles by their successors, which have generated and fostered modes of thought and argument which appear to them to justify division, and to exalt it into a meritorious exercise of individual right of action. Indeed they seem not to entertain the suspicion that their divisive principles may possibly be antichristian, and that the actual law of conduct which they involve is in man himself, and out of God. The truth is, the principle of Christian unity has been so long without a living

representative, and of late years it has had so few and such indifferent expositors, that what has been said of an ethical argument may as truly be said of it—it is now undoubtedly looked upon as belonging to the region of abstractions to which the temper of the age, and the prevailing pursuits of this money-making country are averse. The consequence is, deeper and holier thoughts of a law of human conduct, out of self and in God, have given place to the popular antichristian sentiment, that the spirit and precept of the Gospel are not very grievously sinned against when we agree to differ. And yet, surely any man may see, that it is one thing to fall short of absolute unity when we are honestly desiring it, and striving after it because we know and acknowit to be the will of God; and that it is a very different matter to attempt to establish another principle of order, or justify another law of conduct, because it may be more congenial to our own position, or leave us more at liberty to follow our own independent line of thought and action. I have therefore a very strong conviction that Nonconformists are following their own will and way, and not the way and will of God, when they shift the ground of their separation from necessity to choice, and when they seek to weaken the National Church, instead of doing their utmost to reform the abuses of which they complain, and to render it as effective

as possible. Would they only pursue this latter course, the result must be, by God's blessing, that unity among professing Christians would be restored, and that the Church, strengthened by a great accession of spiritual members, would be in a position to evangelize our neglected millions, and provide adequate means of spiritual edification for the whole population, and thus perform the important and very necessary duties of her vocation.

As to the matter of endowments, who would object to them if they were made equitably available for the promotion of the spiritual well-being of the nation? It is simply ridiculous to talk about the principle of endowment as opposed to the voluntary principle. In all cases the one ought only to be subsidiary to the other, and both united will have enough to do to provide adequate ministerial labour and supervision for the spiritual wants of the nation. The reformation of the Church's external administration, and the re-arrangement of its temporalities may safely be left in the hands of the laity, whose province it is to regulate such matters. There is no fear but that the Government and the Legislature will do their duty if we can come to an agreement respecting our doctrinal differences, and if there be an honest and earnest desire on the part of Nonconformists to return to the bosom of the Church. The man is unworthy of the name and

place of a statesman in a Christian nation who would ignore Christianity in the discharge of the duties of his office, or refuse to be guided by its precepts. Besides, there are lower considerations of a political character arising out of the principle of unity, which it would be culpable in any statesman to overlook. Every man must see that the division of the people on the all-important subject of religion is a disturbing cause, which is fraught with dangerous consequences; and, therefore, whatever tends to promote or perpetuate division, should be effectively dealt with, and done away, so far as the evil admits of a direct and practical remedy. Occasions may arise, as they have done aforetime, from this very source, which may bring the nation into a state of anarchy, or something approaching to it; and it is much easier, and safer, and wiser to prevent the workings of a disturbing element, than to arrest its virulence when matters are approaching a crisis. A nation divided against itself, on the subject of religion, and the multiplication of rival Churches, cannot be regarded with indifference by any religious mind; for surely obedience to the revealed will of God in the matter of unity, as in everything else—the security, peace, and well-being of the kingdom, and the moral and religious edification of the people—are the high objects which all good men should unite their efforts to promote.

I am persuaded that there is not a God-fearing man in or out of Parliament who would advocate divisive principles, if it were given him to see that they are contrary to the order and will of God, or who would refuse to give his willing help to insure the restoration of Christian unity. The man who would advocate expediency, or plead the claims of vested interests in opposition to the declared will of God, when there was a desire for unity on the part of religious men of different religious communities, is utterly unfit for being a legislator in a professedly Christian country. But the one great want meets us everywhere, and that is the light of Christianity; for its nature, spirit, and principles are comparatively unknown, and therefore they are unconsciously disregarded; and a law of action which is self-willed, self-seeking, and self-pleasing—which is in man himself and out of God—in Church, in State, and in religious communities, is all but universally followed.

The man who knows anything of Christianity will have little sympathy with the able writer in the *Review*, when he talks of "the proper dignity and self-respect of all parties." Christianity inculcates self-abasement, and in this the difference is manifested between the merely converted man, and the Christian in whom there is the life and nature of Christ. I confess freely that I can see nothing

but natural pride, or self-respect, as it is called, in the objection on the part of Nonconformists to receive Episcopal Ordination. As to the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, if there be anything in it, it is best to have it. If any man believes that there is nothing in it, at all events he cannot but know the fact that there is a National Church. If he believes his Bible, he must also believe that the Church, wherever it is planted, ought to exist in unity, and that a schism in the body is contrary to the will of God, an actual contravening of the prayer of Christ, a violation of the Christian precept, and an utter repudiation of the apostolical injunction, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you." The question is not, whether as a baptized people our Nonconforming Communities belong to the Church universal, or whether a *de facto* ministry is not owned of God, or whether Presbyterian ordination be not valid; neither is the status of Nonconformist ministers a matter which at all requires to be brought into consideration. The National Church is an existing institution; all her clergy are subject to the same laws, and are admitted to the office of the ministry in an appointed way and by a certain form, the use of which is enjoined by the laws of the land; therefore, there is no room for questions or scruples.

What is required is simply submission to a common law, the bishops on their part dispensing with the usual examinations which precede ordination. But with regard to all such matters, I have only to say, that if the teaching of the Church be discerned, it is sure to be accepted by the earnest religious mind, and then there will be no hindrance on the part of all concerned to the restoration of Christian unity; for Christianity presents everything to us in the light of Christ and in the light of eternity, and this very soon reduces all questions of status and considerations of proper dignity and self-respect to their own nothingness.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. AITKEN.

LETTER IX.

Conclusion.

MY DEAR SIR,

With all the affection of a brotherly heart, in which I trust there is some measure of the love of God, I entreat the solemn thoughtful consideration of the following question—Is it not a wise, safe, and righteous thing, that God-fearing men should come

to the determination to follow the will of God in this all-important matter, whatever sacrifices it may demand, or whatever sufferings or consequences it may entail? If the answer be in the affirmative, (and it cannot be otherwise) shall we,—do we now make up our minds to do so?

The next thing to be done is to ascertain what the will of God is, under existing circumstances; and, that we may proceed upon sure ground, let us in dependence upon God's help, humbly, prayerfully, and in a teachable spirit examine the foundations and bonds of union *which God has created.* We may be sure we are doing what is right and in accordance with His will, when we determine to act in obedient conformity to their nature and requirements.

Now, THE FIRST BOND OF UNION IS CREATED BY BAPTISM; "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Here we have the foundation of Christian unity. It matters nothing how many other kinds of unity there may be. Doubtless there is a union of believers, and a communion of believers; but we are not made members of the one body by believing, nor are we members of the one body because we are believers; we are not converted into the body, but baptized into the body; as Bengel says, the Holy Spirit has to do with Baptism, for "by one Spirit we are baptized into one body."

The Church, or the new Theocratic Kingdom is not a temporal kingdom like the old Jewish Theocracy, as I have already stated, but a spiritual kingdom under the headship of Christ. When I say *spiritual*, I do not mean, and the word does not imply, that this kingdom consists of saved souls, or of spiritually-minded men; but merely that it is spiritual in contradistinction to temporal. We are distinctly told that it is like unto a net cast into the sea, which incloses both good and bad, or which gathers of every kind. The external Kingdom is an instrumentality for spiritual purposes—a net, but although a net, yet a kingdom—a body of people under the headship of Christ, both good and bad, wise and foolish, whom He makes use of in every variety of ways to promote His own purposes; for the time is not yet come "when He will gather out *of His kingdom* all things that offend, and *them which do iniquity*." Of course the internal or invisible kingdom is the body of Christ in a very much deeper sense, for He is in every member and every member is in Him. But it has pleased Him to call the external Church, as well as the invisible Church His body; as we see in the Gospel by St. Matthew, and in all the Epistles; and there is no necessity at all for confusing the one with the other. The external is, I may say, the mother of the internal; and let it be understood that I am now about to speak ex-

clusively of this instrumentality for spiritual purposes—of the new Theocratic Kingdom under the headship of Christ which has superseded the old Jewish Theocracy, the one being analogous to the other. We all know what is meant by the Methodist body and the Independent body; and therefore there can be little difficulty in forming a conception of the Church in its external aspect as a body under the headship of Christ. Far be it from me to say that baptized Nonconformists are not members of this body. There are schisms *in* the body, and this is bad enough, for the whole body is suffering on account of them. But of what profit is membership, if the very nature of the body is not discerned, if its organic laws are sinned against, and if the obligations of membership are neither felt nor acknowledged? Still the fact remains that "we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body." I have already explained the Church's teaching on the subject of Baptism. I have shewn that we are admitted into the Covenant of Regeneration, made subjects of the Theocratic Kingdom, and members of the body of Christ by the initiatory Sacrament of Baptism, just as the Jewish child was admitted into the Covenant of Circumcision, and made a subject of the old Jewish Theocracy, and a member of the Jewish Church by the initiatory Sacrament of Circumcision. The baptized child is said to be regene-

rate because it is admitted into the Covenant of Regeneration, just as the Jewish child was admitted to the title and standing of an Israelite by the Covenant of Circumcision. The one is no more regenerate *in fact* than the other was an Israelite indeed; but both have been laid under covenant obligation to conform to the requirements, and to strive to obtain the high and ultimate purposes and objects of their respective covenants. Both have been brought nigh unto God by covenant, and have been placed under blessing, and therefore cannot be under the original curse of the broken law; although neither of them could be placed by covenant in the state of justification, which can only be attained by faith of which they were incapable. Our baptized children are therefore the adopted children of the Covenant—children of God, as the subjects of His Theocratic Kingdom—members of Christ, as being baptized into His body, and inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven, as having been admitted into the Theocratic Kingdom, which is always called "the kingdom of heaven." There is nothing in the expressions, meaning, and evident intention of the Church's language, which when rightly explained can be honestly objected against. If Evangelicals and Nonconformists misunderstand the Church's teaching, as they have done, then let them put away their misconceptions frankly, as God-fearing men ought

to do, and I am very sure, that if they will apply themselves in the love of the truth to the right understanding of the Church's teaching, as a whole, upon this subject, in connection with the plain and reiterated declarations in the Word of God, that they will cease to be Nonconformists.

You have an honest and intelligent mind, and are a God-fearing man, and I appeal to you in perfect confidence that an honest answer will be given to my question:—Do Evangelicals (for you know their views as well as I do) and Nonconformists give that weight and place to Baptism which are given in the Word of God? Can you point out to me any works, treatises, commentaries, or sermons, published by Evangelicals or Nonconformists on the following texts which can be at all satisfactory to an honest mind? "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is *one body*, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him

by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "The like figure whereunto *baptism doth also now save us* (not the putting away the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience towards God) *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; *buried with Him in baptism;* WHEREIN *also ye are risen with Him* THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, *who hath raised Him from the dead.*" Then there is the commission to baptize *all nations;* the declaration that we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body; that we are saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; that "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;" and "if thou believest, with all thine heart, thou mayest" be baptized; and "they that gladly received the word were baptized." Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, and all who believed

were baptized; and the great Apostle of the Gentiles, after the scales had fallen from his eyes, arose and was baptized.

The truth is this, as I have already said more than once, that because unconverted Churchmen imagine that they are justified by Baptism, men of the Evangelical School avoid the subject, and seldom or never allude to it from their pulpits; neither do they set themselves to master it. It forms no part of their system; and, although it is submitted to as an appointed ordinance, its nature and object are not understood, and the power of Christ as Our Covenant, which enables us to die unto self, and to rise into the regenerate life, is not believed in. Is it any wonder that it is the common expression of the vulgar mind, even among the converted, "What good can a drop of water do to a man's soul?" There must be a return to the foundation of Christianity before there can be unity, and the people must be taught what Baptism really does mean before they can see that division is a sin against the body of Christ. Throughout this exposition I have taken great pains to explain the true nature and objects of Baptism; and I shall now only say that our children are, through God's grace, capable of godly nurture and preparatory education for the regenerate life, and if we are to have a revival of Christianity, we must begin with them. Let me

add that, in seeking the restoration of Christian unity, we are not beginning in the spirit in which we ought to begin, unless this be our motive that, as we are baptized by the Spirit into the one body, we see and feel it to be our bounden duty, and that of every God-fearing man, to use our utmost endeavours to put an end to our divisions, which grieve the Spirit, contravene the will, and counteract the gracious purposes of our loving God, and are an actual sin against the body of Christ, and the precepts and spirit of Christianity.

THE STATE OF JUSTIFICATION IS BOTH A FOUNDATION AND A LIVING BOND OF UNITY. In the first ages of the Church it necessarily preceded Baptism, and ought ever to do so still in the case of adults. But Christianity now comes to us by descent; that is to say, we are baptized when infants, because we are the offspring of Christian parents, and in anticipation of this order of things our Saviour saith "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." But the strait gate and the wide gate are both before the baptized child, who is exhorted to agonize, to enter into the one and avoid the other; and when a pastor presents an unconverted candidate for Confirmation, or when a bishop confirms without having good reason to believe that the catechumen is in the state of justification, they are each individ-

ually responsible to God for admitting an unqualified person to Church privileges, and the most important rubric in the Prayer Book is very improperly disregarded.

THE THIRD FOUNDATION AND BOND OF UNITY is the highest, the holiest, and the most perfect of all. It is a real and living union with Christ, which is created by the reception of the Life and Nature of Christ, and is that which is symbolized by the relation of the living Vine and its living branches. "WE BEING MANY," saith the Apostle, "ARE ONE BREAD AND ONE BODY; FOR WE ARE ALL PARTAKERS OF THAT ONE BREAD"—that Living Bread "which *came* down," and "which *cometh* down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die;" for thus saith the Lord, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." Here we have the actually regenerate—those who are called the perfect—the invisible Church, every member of which has been created anew in Christ Jesus, is so "joined unto the Lord as to be one spirit," and is truly, not figuratively, "a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." The justified are said to be born again, or born of the Spirit, and this is always one act; the regenerate are not merely born again, but "after the likeness of God they are *created* in righteousness and true holiness;" they "have put on the new man, renewed in knowledge

after the image of Him that *created* them;" they are "His workmanship *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them.

The justified are united together, not because they hold the same views, but because they are one in Christ, because they have all a sense of forgiveness and acceptance and the gift of the Spirit in measure. It matters not to what religious community they may belong, whether they be Churchmen or Dissenters, Romanists or Quakers; if they are in the state of justification, they will have communion with each other on the one common ground from a sameness of experience, because they are all in the enjoyment of the light and liberty of the Gospel; and unconverted men cannot successfully counterfeit their experience, or have communion with them. Now this is true in a much higher and fuller sense in respect to the regenerate; for although regeneration is a work of unconscious progression, yet the less advanced know what they are following after, and the more advanced know the course of dying to self, which they have passed through. They therefore see eye to eye in the light of Christ, who is the life and light of Christianity. They are alike in mind, heart, and spirit, and differ only as the child differs from the man. When truth is placed before them

they instantly, as by a Divine intuition, apprehend it, and debate or opinionativeness is just as foreign to their mind and spirit as any other work of the flesh. They are humble and teachable, and yet able to instruct their teachers. In short, they have the mind and spirit of Christ, and their communion is the true communion of saints, of which we profess our belief in the Apostles' Creed. When therefore, men deny that there is any difference between the Spiritual Life and the Regenerate Life, their denial simply arises from this, that they have no knowledge of the regenerate life in their own experience. Such have not sufficient spiritual discernment to comprehend the difference between our being in Christ for justification, and Christ being in us for regeneration; and thus they take precisely the same kind of ground as the unconverted Churchman, who will not believe that justification is a state of conscious blessedness, because he himself does not enjoy it.

If these three different foundations or bonds of union of God's creating were only discerned and acknowledged, division, or any difference of opinion which could disturb the peace of the Church would be next to an impossibility. Men would clearly see that, as we are baptized by the Spirit into one body, there must be something fearfully wrong if we have not "all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Now it is a striking fact, that Churchmen and Nonconformists are *not* animated by the same spirit in respect to their relationship to the body of Christ. Observe, there are diversities of operation and yet the same Spirit. We are not now treating of the converted and unconverted, but of the operation of the Spirit on the minds of those who acknowledge the unity of the body, and who submit to its organic laws so far as they can do so in the present divided state of Christendom. Whatever may be the shortcomings of Churchmen, happily they have some right conceptions about the will and order of God. But self-will and self-direction are inseparable from the very essence of divisive principles, and the product must ever, less or more, partake of the nature of the essence. Dissenters may be perfectly unconscious of this fact; and doubtless they are so; for it is an invariable spiritual law, that when truth of any kind is ignored, the light of that truth is withheld. By merely looking at truth from without, that we may form our own opinion about it, we do not discern its light; and it is a great mistake of the converted man to suppose, as too many do, that because he has the light of the Spirit on one subject or on one class of truth, that therefore the Spirit enlightens him on every subject. Even the teachable (and they are a small class) can only expect that the Spirit "*will*

guide them into all truth;" and it requires very great teachableness to submit to be led from divisive principles into the principle of unity, which is infused by the Spirit into the minds of Churchmen. For instance, what is the Evangelical Alliance but a repudiation of the foundation of Christian unity which God has created—an ignoring of the fact that we are all baptized by the one Spirit into the one body, and the substitution of an unity of opinion in its stead? If God has enlightened our minds and given us to realize, in saving power, justification by faith, surely inasmuch as the body *is the body of Christ*, and it has pleased Him to make us His mouth, that He may speak through us, by the Spirit, to the edifying of the body, we ought, with our lives in our hands, and despite every kind of opposition, to proclaim the truth to the other members. The subjects of the Theocratic Kingdom have the first claim to our evangelical efforts. It is ever "Begin at Jerusalem." The relationship is created by Sacrament and Covenant of God's appointment, and by the concurrent action of the Spirit, and therefore it is created by God; and to ignore it, or to neglect or repudiate its claims is fratricidal bloodguiltiness. Instead of withdrawing from the body and constituting a separate community, no opposition or provocation ought to move us from the obvious duty of our calling. In short we ought to

lay down our lives for the brethren as Christ laid down His life for us. So careful was our Lord not to provoke the jealousy of the old Jewish Theocracy, that "when He knew that the Pharisees had heard that He made and baptized more disciples than John, He left Judea and departed again into Galilee;" and to the last He observed the Jewish feasts, and taught in the Temple, and cleansed it of the buyers and sellers who had made it a den of thieves. In everything we have Christ for an example; and when we do not follow Him, but systematically pursue a directly opposite course, it is manifest that we have not the spirit of Christ, although we may be born of the Spirit.

It is very evident that God most mercifully winketh at our ignorance respecting the subject of unity, which has been partly induced by the contentions of our forefathers; else the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of unity, would have been withdrawn from us altogether. But because through God's mercy this has not been the case, we are not to suppose that we are not under judgment; for we are all less or more under the domination of the spirit of party, which is an antichristian spirit; and yet this spirit of evil is so congenial to our natural spirit that there is a glorying in its very bitterness; and its antichristian words, principles, and actions have many to applaud them. In fact, the spirit of

party is the intensified essence of the natural spirit, and when it is manifested in religion, as it is daily, every man who has the spirit of Christ in any measure must mourn over the cruel mockery of Christianity which is perpetrated in the name of religion. If the prevailing ignorance concerning the nature of Christianity, and the almost universal domination of the natural spirit, even in matters of religion be not to us an alarming evidence of the fact, that we are all under the terrible judgment of a divisive spirit, instead of possessing the spirit of Christ, what will awaken us to the true character of our spiritual condition? Churchmen have sinned against Evangelical Truth, and can there be any doubt that pride and prejudice have been permitted to do their work, in blinding them as to its nature and saving power? Evangelicals and Nonconformists have ignored the unity of the body, and have sinned against the Christian spirit and Christian truth; and no man who has attempted to enlighten them upon these subjects can have any doubt that they are similarly blinded to the nature and obligations of Christian unity, and that they uniformly mistake Evangelical Truth for Christian Truth. The Churchman may say to the Dissenter, "I have no need of thee;" but the truth for which the Dissenter is God's witness is the very thing that he wants, and for lack of which his soul is in

spiritual darkness, and ready to perish. The Dissenter may say to the Churchman, "I have no need of thee;" but the Church and Christianity are inseparable, and he is only following the wilfulness of the natural spirit, gratifying the pride of his heart, and deluding his own soul when he calls his community a Church; for so far from its being a pillar and ground of Christian truth, it actually repudiates and ignores those truths, which are distinctively and specially Christian; and its very existence as a separate community is in direct defiance of what Christianity inculcates.

If Evangelicals within the Church, when they realized justification by faith, had set themselves to the needful work of converting their brethren, instead of constituting themselves a party within the Church, forming Evangelical Truth into a system, and opposing it to the Church's teaching, I am persuaded that Churchmen would have been given to see Evangelical Truth, and that Evangelicals would also have been given to see Church Truth; and then we should have had Evangelical Truth and Christianity in combination, and Christian unity, instead of two opposing parties, and had there been light and life, peace and efficiency within the Church, which unity would have ensured, I do not believe there would have been one truly pious or intelligent Nonconformist in the land; for objec-

tions to the principle of endowment, and to the union of the Church and State are mere afterthoughts suggested by existing abuses. But while the two parties are boasting themselves against each other, and are each contending that wisdom, and truth, and piety are only with them, instead of humbling themselves before God, because of their differences and contentions, and because of the virtual schism in the body; can they expect anything less in the way of judgment at the hand of God, than to be left to reap the fruit of their own doings, and to be given over to the domination of their own proud and arrogant natural spirit; and this judgment is not the less fearful because it is so little felt.

But who is this that presumes to speak in such condemnatory terms of the two great parties within the Church? Whatever else I may be, I am an earnest peace-maker, according to the light and grace that has been given to me; and as to the charge of presumption, there is no ground for it. When two great parties, each containing so many learned, intelligent, and earnestly religious men, have taken their stand in direct antagonism to each other —the one upon Church Truth, and the other upon Evangelical Truth—and have each the presumption, not merely to say that they are right in what they believe, but that their opponents are wrong in what they believe, they are offering a positive insult

to the mind and judgment of their opponents; and surely, under such circumstances, it cannot be any great presumption in the humblest man in the land to say to each party, "You are right in what you believe, but you are altogether wrong in what you deny." Will even those Churchmen who do not discern the deeper things of God say that I am wrong in the expositions which I have given of the Church's teaching? They may object to the Evangelical Truth which I have mixed up with that teaching, but they will not say that the Church teaching which I have endeavoured to expound is wrong. And will Evangelicals say that the exposition I have given of Evangelical Truth is wrong? They may object to the Church teaching which I have mixed up with Evangelical Truths, but they will not, and cannot say that my exposition of Evangelical Truth is wrong. Where then is the presumption, seeing the truth which I am endeavouring to expound in all earnestness and according to my best ability, is attested by the great body of Churchmen on the one side, and by the great body of Evangelicals, in and out of the Church, on the other? If any man be disposed to deal hardly with me, it must be because I am doing my best at peace-making, for I have had none other purpose and object in all I have written.

Blessed be God! even now, notwithstanding the

perversity which has been wrought in men's minds by two centuries of opposition, contention, and division, looking, as we may ever do, to the gracious mercy of our most loving Father, there is every reason to hope that the prejudices and oppositions of unconverted Churchmen to the doctrine of justification by faith would give way, if our Nonconforming brethren would, with one consent, return to the Church, acknowledging that the unity of God's creating, howsoever created, must be the true Christian principle of unity, and that division and divisive principles are contrary to the declared will of God, to the plainest apostolical injunctions, and to the spirit and precepts of Christianity; and expressing their determination that they will no longer have any share in the guilt of perpetuating a schism in the body of Christ. The Christian does not say you have done wrong, and therefore you are the cause of my sin. We have yet to learn what Christianity means when we put forth any such self-justifying plea. It is all very true that our predecessors in the Church deserve to be blamed, and that we have neither corrected their errors nor manifested the spirit of Christ; but as the generality of Nonconformists profess to be converted men, it behoves them to be the first to set the example of acting upon Christian principles, and to manifest the Christian spirit; and most certainly they do not

know what it means, if they do not see it to be a self-sacrificing spirit. When men take a right position simply in obedience to the will of God, and because they are determined to act upon Christian principles at any sacrifice, notwithstanding their predilections towards a different course of action, they manifest the true spirit of Christ, and acquire a power over others, and a power over themselves of God's giving, which breaks the hearts of their opponents, puts to shame the natural spirit, and carries conviction to the most suspicious minds. For those who can conquer self, the most difficult of all antagonists to deal with, are surely fitting instruments for every order of ministerial service. O, if through the mercy of God, Nonconformists of every denomination were only given to see the moral beauty, the Christian loveliness, the Divine grandeur of self-sacrificing humility! O that the Spirit of God would inspire them with a determination to abjure the counsel and self-seeking of the natural spirit, and to act in this matter in accordance with the will of God and the spirit of Christ! If, instead of saying to Churchmen, "How far will you come to meet us? What concessions will you make? What position will you give us? What authority will you exercise over us? What arrangements will you enter into that we may work together as one body possessing equal privileges?—they

would, on an appointed day, set apart for the double purpose of humiliation and thanksgiving, come to Church and partake of the Holy Communion; they would bow the hearts of every man in the nation as the heart of one man. It would be a day to be remembered on earth with joyous gratitude to the God of unity and love, as long as the sun and moon shall endure, and to be celebrated among the glorious achievements of the Lamb and the Spirit of God, throughout an endless Eternity. Every arrangement which a generous love could devise would, I am persuaded, be liberally and cheerfully made; and there would be a holy emulation in vieing with each other as to who could most fully manifest the spirit of Christ. This is the way in which Jesus conquers, and such are the only weapons which ought to be used in His holy warfare. In obedience to His Father's will He gave Himself up, and yielded Himself unto death; but, by dying, He conquered the powers of earth and hell. One voluntary solemn act of intercommunion would heal the wounds and wipe away the reproach of centuries. It would pave the way for a complete and permanent union, which God in His good providence, and by His enlightening Spirit, would assuredly work out for us; because, by such an act, we should take ourselves out of our own hands, and in faith and loving confidence put ourselves into

His; and who that knoweth our God could have a doubt but that He would undertake for us? Then might we expect that the Spirit of God would be poured out from on high, and then might we hope to see the highest order of unity, the unity of the One Bread gloriously manifested. In these last days, as in the days of the Apostles, there would be saints as well as faithful believers in Christ Jesus in the Church of God. And have we not the promise that "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound?"

I believe that our dear native land, which the Lord has so highly favoured and blessed, is still producing big and honest and truth-loving hearts, if the fettering cords which so unnaturally compress and pervert them could only be broken. Love would break them, as if they were made of rotten withes or burnt tow; but debate, ungenerous suspicion, or the selfish cry of vested interests will convert them into chains stronger than iron or adamant. Then, there is the call to duty and glorious enterprise. The dark and shamefully neglected places in our large towns are sending forth a moral pestilence throughout our land; and the Gospel preached in simplicity and power, under effective

pastoral supervision, is the only remedy, and an united Church, by God's blessing, would apply it with success; for all hearts are in God's hands; and if we act in accordance with His will, there will be no lack either of labourers or supplies. The living testimony of an united Church that God hath sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world, would put to shame and quickly extinguish heterodoxy in all its existing forms. Essays and Reviews, and the weak and frivolous speculations of unsettled minds, which unhappily have come to the aid of a reviving infidelity, would require no refutation, as every work of darkness is seen in its own true character in the light of Christianity. The whole world has been marvellously opened up to us for evangelizing enterprise. India, China, Africa, Turkey, and Italy itself are stretching out their hands unto God for help; and an united Church could extend its missions in effective power to every spot in this wide world, where the name of Jesus is not known, or where His saving power is not felt. Surely such calls to duty and incitements to action will not be disregarded by a generous, soul-loving, Christ-loving people. We ought to know our high vocation, and feel its responsibility. An united people and an united Church are essential to the effective discharge of our obligations, and to the successful fulfilment of our requirements.

I thank God, with a hopeful heart, as I have done again and again in the course of this very imperfect exposition, that the restoration of unity demands no compromise of any principle which can claim an affinity to godliness, and no sacrifice of any one truth, for which opposing parties are contending. What requires to be done is simply that we should all humble ourselves before God, and become the teachable learners of each other's truth, instead of fighting against each other. If any enlightened man will make an honest and earnest attempt to understand what is meant by the Church of the living God "which is the pillar and ground of the truth," the Spirit of God will help him to comprehend both its nature and the purposes of its institution. It is very true that the nineteenth Article is not very well calculated to enlighten an enquirer upon the subject; for he would naturally enough lay hold of the first part of the definition —"The visible Church is a congregation of faithful men," and this would be sure to mislead him. It is the right administration *of the sacraments* and the preaching of the pure Word of God which make up the true conception of what the Church is; for it does not consist simply of the men who faithfully administer or receive. Through the gracious overruling of Christ, the Head of the Church, the pure Word of God has come down to

us, and the sacraments are not only duly administered, but their nature and purpose are fully explained. The work has been faithfully done as far as these matters are concerned. But the men are not the net. The people of this nation are not the kingdom. Its territory, its laws, its religion, its government, as well as the people, form the one kingdom; the people may be less or more pious, learned, and intelligent—or irreligious, illiterate, and debased; still, whatever their condition may be, it is the same kingdom. It is birth that makes the Englishman; it is Baptism that makes the Christian. To be born in England does not make the man a scholar and a gentleman. Circumcision made the child a true subject of the Jewish Theocracy, but it did not circumcise his heart. So, Baptism makes the child a Christian, but not a *Christian indeed*. There is but one body, just as surely as there is but one Spirit, "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; and we are baptized by the one Spirit into the one body." This is God's appointed method of admission into the Church; and when men allege that there is any other way they follow their own imaginations, and contradict the Word of God; and the consequence is, they are blinded to the nature of the Church, and to the purposes of its institution. The supposition that conversion makes the convert a member either of

the visible or the invisible Church, or a Christian, is just as unwarrantable and contrary to the fact, as to suppose that the opening of a blind man's eyes makes him an emperor; and as long as Evangelicals and Nonconformists adhere to their misconceptions on this subject there will be no peace within the Church, and the return of Nonconformists to its bosom will be an impossibility.

I have done my best to make the real causes of all our differences and divisions intelligible to an intelligent spiritual mind. I am far from being satisfied with my work, and yet I have neither the courage nor the time to write these letters over again before they pass out of my hands. If, by God's blessing, I shall succeed, in any measure, in my attempt to open the eyes of Evangelicals and Nonconformists to the true nature of Baptism and its inseparable connexion with Christianity, the restoration of unity will be comparatively an easy matter; as God will assuredly undertake for us, and carry the work successfully through every stage of its progress. And should I not be spared to see any fruit of my labours, it shall, I hope, be my dying prayer, as it was that of my most blessed and loving Lord and Master, that all professing Christians may become one, even as the Father is in Christ, and as Christ is in the Father, that the world may believe that God hath sent His Son.

Stirring words ought to be followed by an earnest and persevering course of action; and anything I can do will be done with a glad heart and a willing mind. I shall however have nothing to do with controversy or debate; but I am ready to give every explanation in my power, according to my measure of light, to earnest enquirers, whoever they may be; and I shall gladly meet any number of our Nonconforming brethren anywhere, and at any time, if the Lord spare me, and explain to them, as God may enable me, such parts of the Church's teaching as they may conceive to be objectionable or difficult to comprehend; and there are others whose heads are clearer than mine who will render their willing assistance.

I have again to apologize for the liberty I have taken in writing to others through you. I adopted this course partly because letter writing admits of greater freedom, and requires less careful study than a formal treatise; but chiefly because your attention has been specially directed to this subject, which ought to be deeply interesting to all. I again entreat you kindly to overlook and excuse any expressions which may be deemed offensive, and also whatever in my manner of writing may seem to be dictatorial. I am sensible that I have often made use of strong expressions; and my excuse for doing so is simply this: I have felt, and do feel most

deeply, that our contentions and divisions are not only a disgrace to Christianity, but that they have degraded and debased the religious mind of the day, and almost extinguished the light of Christianity. JESUS THE SAVIOUR, and CHRIST THE SECOND ADAM and God-man have been, in effect, divided and pitted against each other. Now, without the saving realization of Evangelical Truth there can be no salvation, and without the reception of the life and nature of the Second Adam there can be no vital Christianity; and the fact is only too patent that Churchmen virtually ignore Evangelical Truth, which refers to Jesus as our Saviour, and that Evangelicals virtually ignore Church Truth, which refers to Christ as the Second Adam, whose life and nature we must possess before we can be Christians indeed. If therefore I have felt deeply, and expressed myself strongly, in endeavouring to throw some light upon this fearful state of things, "Is there not a cause?"

I have sometimes written hopefully, sometimes under depression—giving way to the apprehension that I was only wasting precious time by attempting impossibilities; very generally *currente calamo;* and, sometimes, after much consideration; but always I trust, in dependence upon God's help, and in the spirit of love. Churchmen may imagine that I have formed an uncharitable opinion of their spiritual

condition; but there can be only one right opinion of the condition of an unconverted man, whether he be a Churchman or a Dissenter; and I should not only be guilty of uncharitableness, but of blood-guiltiness, were I to make use of a single expression which might tend to deceive him as to his state. It is true love, and not uncharitableness, which compels me to deal faithfully with him according to my measure of light. Evangelicals on the other hand may allege that, in repudiating the Church's teaching on the subject of the sacraments, they do not ignore Christianity; I shall simply ask them, for the second time, to point out the writings of the men of their school since the days of Leighton, in which the distinctive doctrines of Christianity are expounded. Most certainly they are greatly mistaken when they imagine that Christianity is merely a combination of Evangelical Truth and the moral law spiritualized; for Christianity is the manifestation of the life of Christ.

Whatever may be the result of this honest attempt to restore unity among professing Christians, by proposing the teaching of the Prayer Book as the only right and possible basis of unity, I shall not have written in vain, if some of the thoughtful and intelligent readers of these letters are brought to admit the fact, that *our differences and divisions are owing to the want of the light and life of Christ*

in ourselves, and not to any real contrariety in the doctrines which are held and taught by Churchmen and Nonconformists; for between Church Truth and Evangelical Truth there is a perfect harmony, which cannot fail to be discerned *in the light of Christ.*

I am, dear Sir,
Yours affectionately in Christ,
R. AITKEN.

PENDEEN PARSONAGE,
June, 1867.

From the Prayer for the Church Militant.

Almighty and everliving God, who by Thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men; We humbly beseech Thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto Thy Divine Majesty, beseeching Thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord; And grant, that all they that do confess Thy holy Name may agree in the truth of Thy holy Word, and live in unity, and godly love;.... for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

Prayer for Unity.

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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Aitken, R.

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